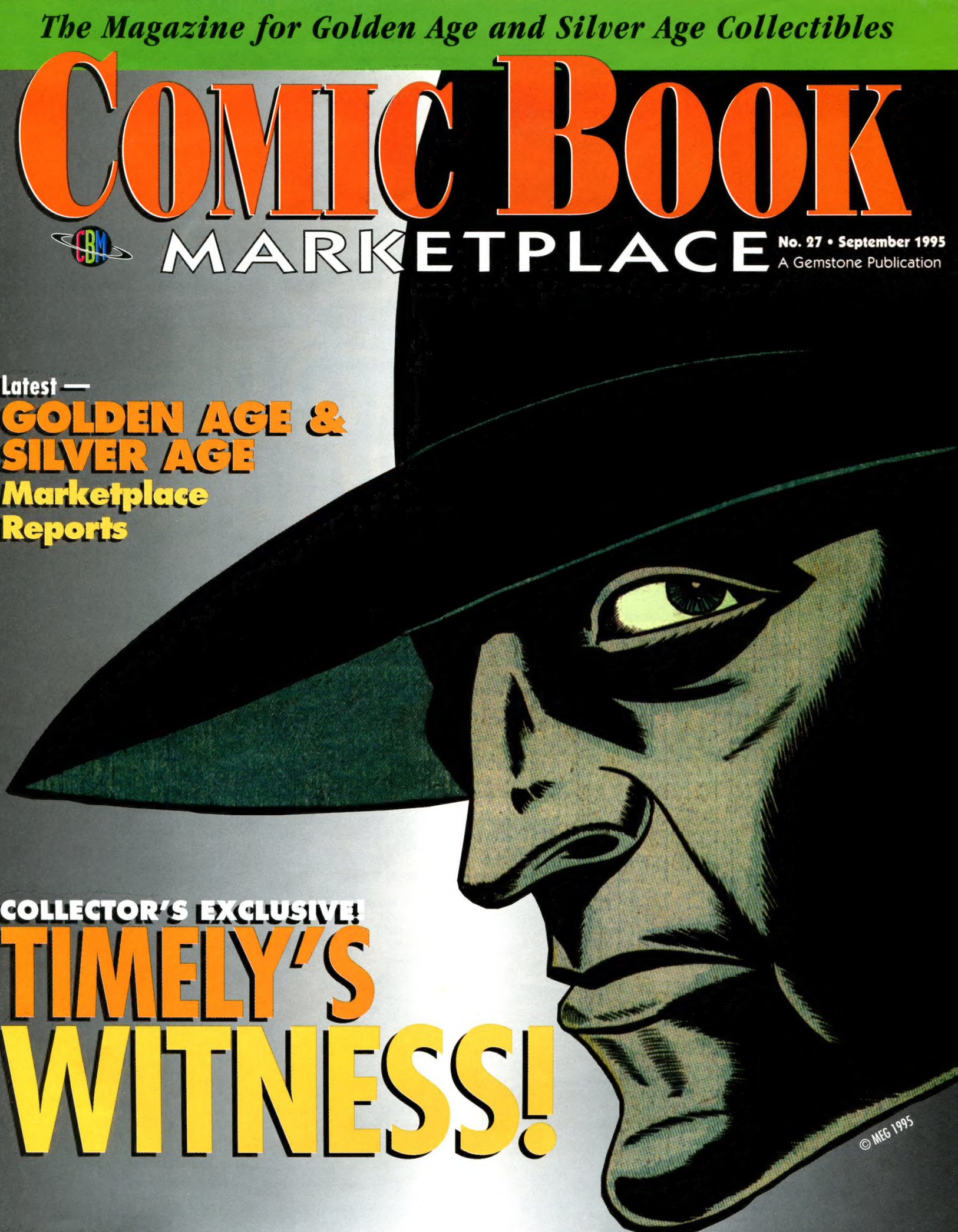
The Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectibles

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 27 • September 1995
A Gemstone Publication

Latest —
GOLDEN AGE & SILVER AGE Marketplace Reports



COLLECTOR'S EXCLUSIVE!

TIMELY'S WITNESS!

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IT'S REALLY QUITE

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Adventures Into Terror #44 VF $195
Adventures Into Terror #3 FN $60
Air Fighters V2/#5 FN (Flag cvr)... $275
All American #26 VG/FN (origin & 1st app. Sargon the Sorcerer) $1,000
All American #29 FN $1,000
All American #69 VG/F $200
All American #18 VG/FN $3,500
All Flash #13 (silverfish btm right hand corner o/w FN+, King app.) $636
All Flash #25 FN $350
All Star #28 (center crease on cvr o/w VF) $1,330
All Winners #4 FN+ (classic war cvr by Al Avison) $1,100
All Winners #8 (1/4" tear on left corner, has "500" &"800" on cvr, Schomburg cvr o/w FN) $700
Amazing Adventures #1 VF+ (Ziff-Davis) $560
Amazing Man #25 VF (looks better than VF, scarce, Wolverton issue).... $1,250
Amazing Mystery Funnies V2/#7 FN (Scarce, intro Fantom of the Fair) $3,000
Astonishing #29 (crease down middle o/w fine) $107
Batman #31 VF (s/n on cvr from Cookeville collection) $700
Black Hood #9 VF/NM (white pages, glossy cvr) $800
Black Knight #1 VF/NM (Atlas) $850
Black Knight #2 VF/NM (Atlas) $600
Black Magic #17 VF $170
Black Magic V7/#5 VG (Hitler cvr) .. $24
Black Magic #24 VG (Smn/Krby art) . $60
Black Magic V2/#1 (sm spine roll o/w VF, Simon & Kirby art) $240
Black Magic #6 VF $330
Black Magic V2/#3 (crease in center of cvr, hardly noticeable o/w VF+).... $170
BlackHawk #9 (#1) VF+ (tight & white, key book) $3,000
Blackhawk #11 VF+ $600
Blue Bolt #103 VF $100
Blue Bolt #118 FN/VF $125
Blue Bolt WT #119 FN/VF $300
Blue Ribbon #2 VF (great cvr)..... $500
Blue Ribbon #3 (FN overall, classic Biro cvr) $450
Blue Ribbon #16 (very light color touch on left corner b/c o/w FN) $400
Captain America #59 (very light color touch on top red, sm tear seal, nice paper o/w FN) $1,100
Captain Fearless #2 ..... $300
Captain Marvel #100 VF/NM (Origin retold) $400
Captain Science #4 VF+(St John, flat & tight, Wood/Orlando cvr/art) $525
Casper #3 (sm cut flaw o/w VF) ... $640
Casper #5 VG/FN (St John) $214
Casper #4 GD (St John) $72
Casper #18 (Harvey File copy) $230
Comic Cavalcade #11 VF(s/n on cvr, from Cookeville collection) $600
Complete #2 VF+ (Scarce, Timely Schomburg cvr)..... $1,000
Crack #4 (loose centerfold, white pages o/w FN)..... $375
Crack #6 (FN (Black Condor) $375
Crack #16 (silverfish 1/4" right corner o/w VF+)..... $400
Daredevil #5 VF (Claw vs.Ghost)... $975
Daredevil #8 VF (Nazi plane cvr, Nitro ends)..... $975
Detective #85 ..... $900
Detective #54 ..... $1,300
Eerie #7 FN/VF $250
Eerie #4 NM $470
Eerie #9 VF $220
Eerie #16 VF+ $48
Eerie #1 FN/VF (ziff-Davis) $192
Ellery Queen #2 VG $100
Ellery Queen #3 VG/F $75
Flash #2 (cvr loose, minor tape repair o/w FN) $2,800
Human Torch #30 ..... $660
Jungle #81 VF..... $160
Kid Komics #1 (sm tear at top of spine o/w VF) $2,572
Magic #10 VF $400
Magic #28 VF/NM $230
Magic #2 FN- $410
Magic #15 VF/NM $340
Magic #18 VF $340
Magic #62 NM $76
Magic #65 VF+ $76
Magic #67 VF+ $76
Magic #103 VG $26
Magic #106 VG/F $34
Marvel Tales #96 VF $570
Marvel Tales #152 VF+ $140
Marvel Tales #105 FN (w/silvrfish).. $386
Master #27 FN/VF $500
New Book of Comics #2 FN (contains re-prints More Fun 15 & 16, scarce) $6,000
Star Spangled #5 $(sm tear seal front cvr o/w FN) $1,000
Strange Tales #80 VF $200
Strange Tales #76 VF $300
Strange Tales #91 FN+ $114
Strange Tales #92 VF- $200
Strange Tales Annual #1 FN/VF.... $480
Superboy #1 FN+..... $3,000
World's Finest #5 VF $1,300
Zoot #14 (centerfold loose o/w FN, used in "Seduction of the Innocent").... $300

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SOLD: Captain America 1
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SOLD: Marvel Comics 1
$55,000

	CGSA		
Adventure Comics 103	NM	80	$2,200
All Star Comics 1	FN	35	$3,850
All Star Comics 8	VG+	25	$4,200
All-American Comics 16	VG	20	$13,000
Amazing Spider-Man 1	VFN++	68	$13,000
Amazing-Man Comics 5	R aFN	40	$4,400
Batman 47	VFN+	65	$2,850
Brave and the Bold 28	VFN++	68	$4,000
Captain America 1 (Allentown)	NM++	88	$75,000
Fantastic Four 1	VF/NM	70	$11,000
Flash Comics 92	VFN	60	$2,200

	CGSA		
House of Secrets 1	VFN++	68	$1,450
Incredible Hulk 1	NM	75	$15,400
Marvel Comics 1	VFN	60	$55,000
More Fun Comics 62 (Mile High)	NM/M	90	$6,050
Phantom Lady 17	NM+	85	$5,500
Star Spangled Comics 94 (Hawk)	NM/M	90	$1,250
Superman 14	NM	75	$2,850
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen 1	NM	80	$8,250
Vault of Horror 12 (White Mtn)	VFN+	65	$4,950
Weird Tales of Future 2 (White Mtn)	VFN+	65	$11,000
X-Men 1	NM	75	$4,400

R: Restored, a: Appearance

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a: Appearance Grade, d: Double Cover, t: Trimmed Book, R: Restored (C: Color Touch, S: Slight (e.g. tear sealed, cleaned, etc), L: Light, M: Moderate, E: Extensive),
PgQ: Page Quality (0.0, 1, 2, 2.5, 3: White; 3.3: Near White; 3.5: Off-White; 4: Beige or Cream Color. Page Quality follows the CGSA grade.
P: Pedigree (AL:Allentown, BM:Bathlshem, CB:Circle 8, CA:Cosmic Airplane, CC:Carson City, CH:Chicago, DV:Denver, FC:File Copy, GA:Gaines File Copy, LA:Larson, MH:Mile High, PA:Pennsylvania, SF:San Francisco, WM:White Mountain)
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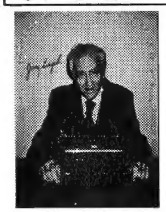
100 99 98 97 96 95 94 93 92 91		90	85 80 75	70	65 60 55	50	45 40 35	30	25 20	15	10	6	3
PgQ 0 1 2 2.5		3	3.3	4	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10



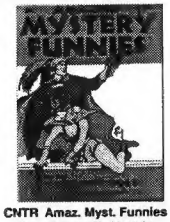
Jerry Siegel's Typewriter
1st & Only Portable Typewriter
1938 Royal $65,000

DC Action Comics Ash Can 1
Very Rare
VFN+ 65 (5.0) $40,000

DC Adventure Comics 103
Best Known Copy/ 1st Superboy
NM/M 90 (3.3) $8,500

DC All-American Comics 61
Origin/1st App Solomon Grundy
VF/VF+ 63 (4.5) $3,000

MVL Amazing Fantasy 15
Origin/1st App Spider-Man
VF++ 68 (3.5) $20,000



CNTR Amaz. Myst. Funnies 1
Everett-C, 1st D. Kent App.
S aVFN 60 (4.5) $1,750

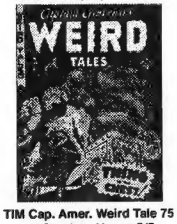
FWCT America's Greatest 1
Mile High / White Pages
NM+ 85 (2.0) $7,000

DC Batman 1
Origin Batman/1st App Joker
VG/FN 30 (3.3) $20,000

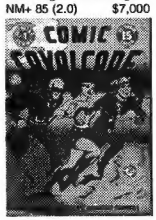
DC Brave And The Bold 34
Origin / 1st App SA Hawkman
NM++ 88 (3.5) $3,350

FWCT Bulletman 3
Mile High
NM/M 90 (3.0) $2,100

TIM Captain America Comics 1
Origin / 1st App Capt America
VG+ 25 (5.0) $9,275

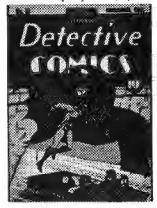


TIM Cap. Amer. Weird Tale 75
No Cap App, Horror-C/S
FN+ 45 (4.5) $1,500



DC Comic Cavalcade 1
Flash,G.L.,W.W. Begin
VG+ 25 (4.5) $2,200

DC Danger Trail 3
Mile High /Best Known Copy
NM+ 85 (1.0) $6,500



DC Detective 33
Origin Batman Retold
VG 20 (4.0) $6,500

DC Detective 35
Batman-C Begin, Hypo-C
G/VG 15 (4.5) $2,000

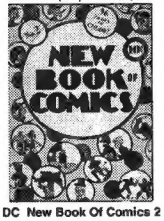
Fox Fantastic Comics 3
Lou Fine-C, Early Robot-C
VG/FN 30 (4.5) $2,000

DC Flash 105
Origin Flash Retold
VF++ 68 (4.0) $5,000

MLJ Hangman Comics 8
2nd App Super Duck
VFN 55 (4.5) $1,200

DC More Fun Comics 101
Origin/1st App Superboy
FN/VFN 50 (4.0) $5,000

Fox MysteryMen Comics 8
Lou Fine-C
VG+ 25 (4.5) $1,500



DC New Book Of Comics 2
Mile High
NM 80 (2.0) $17,500

DC New Comics 8
Scarce
VFN+ 65 (5.0) $3,000

DC New York World's Fair 40
Superman,Batman & Robin-C
VFN+ 65 (4.5) $9,500

QCG Plastic Man 1
Jack Cole-C/A, Game Of Death
VG/FN 30 (4.5) $1,250

DC Real Fact Comics 5
Batman/Robin-C
NM 80 (2.0) $2,750

DC Showcase 4
Origin/1st App SA Flash
NM 80 (4.0) $40,000

DC Showcase 8
2nd App SA Flash
FN/VFN 50 (3.5) $5,200

DC Superman 1
Origin Superman
M aVG/FN 30 (6.5) $18,000

CONT Suspense Comics 6
L.B. Cole-Cover
FN 40 (5.0) $1,500

July 1995

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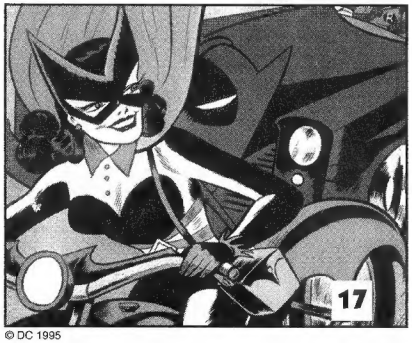

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A Gemstone Publication

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You'll tremble! You'll stare in amazement! You'll refuse to believe your startled eyes! But you won't be able to stop reading when The Witness speaks!

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A Weird Discovery!

While meandering about the maze of dealers at the 1995 Chicago Con last month I was thinking about the words of my (now deceased) friend and "mentor", Rick Durrell. When I was a "kid collector" he was one of the few adult collectors who frequented the bookstores. He was also one of the few adult hobbyists back then who would take the time to educate us about comic history. He would always say "just when you think you've seen it all, something new is discovered".

As I recalled Rick's words, I suddenly saw an odd looking issue nestled among the bountiful stock at the Kevin Forbes (of Kentucky) booth. It had that odd "ashcan" look, muted colors, and an overall "strangeness" that is guaranteed to hook my interest.

Further discussion with Kevin revealed that the book was a consignment item from Tim Cottrill, owner of The Bookery Fantasy & Comics shop in Fairborn, Ohio. Turns out that the weird *Weird Comics* (see color section) was in Tim's Golden Age box for several years, and just happened to be included in the items destined for Chicago.

Tim's description (neatly typed on the mylar) explained "*Weird Comics* #12 (Canadian Edition) Duo-Tone cover. VERY RARE. Fox reprints are rare in general— neither Overstreet nor Canuck Comics mentions them among the known Canadian reprint editions. The cover is the same as the U.S. #12 (except for the color of course). The indicia (which is, oddly enough, at the bottom of the back cover ad) reads "WEIRD, No. 12-March, 1941 Published in Canada by Anglo-American Publishing Co. Ltd., Toronto, Ont., Canada," which is similar to many later Canadian comics.

Tim has suggested that, because no Canadian reprint comics were produced during WWII, the strange issue of *Weird* must have been published prior to the war or possibly just after. The comic book researchers that I have spoken with agree with Tim Cottril's hypothesis... with most voting for a pre-war publication date.

I may never determine whether it was published in the early 1940s or the mid 1940s... but that's a frustration many endure when they discover something new. What's really important is that incredible feeling of excitement that the "thrill of discovery" confers... and every seasoned collector out there knows exactly what I'm talking about! Words like "profit" and "investment" pale when compared to that incredible rush of heart-pounding, adrenaline-charged exhilaration as I gaze upon something new and undocumented. For me, it's that feeling that is the greatest "payoff" in this hobby.

We've been researching, quantifying, and chronicling the universe of comic books for decades now... but there's so much more to discover! Right now, even as you read this, new discoveries are out there waiting. They are waiting at flea markets and yard sales... in local shops... and in mail order catalogs. They are waiting in antique stores... in garages, storage sheds, basements, and attics... and at conventions. They are even waiting right in our own collections, in material that you may have looked at hundred times... but just haven't seen it yet! And these discoveries relate to every decade, genre, and age of comic book publishing, not just the ancient stuff!

As I write this the San Diego Convention is a mere nine days away... and I can hardly wait. As I meander about the maze of dealers I'll be recalling the excitement associated with that weird *Weird Comics* and thinking... "Just when you think you've seen it all...".

Gary

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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SO, IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR THAT HARD TO FIND GOLDEN AGE PIECE OR TRYING TO COMPLETE ONE OF YOUR RUNS, WE ARE HERE TO HELP.
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Mortified

I'm mortified. As one of my choices for the five greatest comic book covers listed (in CBM #25), I listed Famous Funnies #622. Actually, it's Famous Funnies #214, the red moon Frazetta cover. The number "622" is the category it's listed under in the Photo-Journal. Aaarrgh!

John R. Cochran, New York

Crockett Time Travel

I have been looking for a March issue of the Comic Book Marketplace because of an article I happened to see a Xerox copy of from Howard Bender. Mr. Bender is an artist who happens to be a big Davy Crockett collector. Last year I happened to write to him about a Davy Crockett comic I remembered from my childhood. It was the Davy Crockett "time travel story". I remember some of the details of the story, but I did not remember which comic the story had appeared in.

Mr. Bender had never heard of this story either, but he asked me to write to him and give him as many details about the story that I could remember. Later, he wrote to me and told me that he had found the comic I was looking for — Forbidden Worlds #39. He sent me a copy of the article that was published in your March issue of the Comic Book Marketplace. I tried to find a copy here in Indianapolis, but none of the local dealers carried it. I got the impression that they would rather promote all the recent hot comics.

On another note, I have been enjoying some Golden Age comics that I ordered from Microcolor on Microfiches. While they are not as nice as owning the original Golden Age comics — they are a little more affordable. Thank you,

Brian D. Gardner, Indiana

Comic Book Marketplace can be ordered from any shop just by asking for it. Failing that, subscription service is available. In reference to Howard Bender, he has unselfishly contributed untold years of effort and work to compile his excellent checklists. Howard is one of the unsung heroes of comic book research! As for comics on microfiche, Microcolor has done a great job and is an excellent source of research information, and at a reasonable price. I wish someone would develop a device that would allow you to project comic pages (on microfiche) like slides large enough so that groups of individuals could read and analyze stories at the same time. Someday...

Nazis To Commies

Re: Move over Julie (in CBM #25), The Black Cobra was originally a Harry "A" Chesler character that first appeared in Dynamic Comics #1. This Black Cobra predates the Captain Flight appearances. Now here's the interesting part: The Red Rocket story in Ajax Phantom Lady #4 is the Black Cobra story from Dynamic re-worked! Why they did this when Ajax was already doing a Black Cobra series is anybody's guess!

Similarly, the "Satan's Seal" story starring Phantom Lady in the Ajax Phantom Lady #5 (#1) was the reworked artwork from Spitfire Comics #132 (1944). In the 1954 conversion, Nazis are redrawn to be "Commies." Check out page 4, last panel and you'll find a swastika that should have been replaced with a red star!

Also, Lone Rider was not a "knock-off" of Marvel's Black Rider. He could not possibly have been since Lone Rider was created as a newspaper strip by Jack Kirby in the late 1930's and obviously predates BR. These strips were reprinted in comic books, the first appearing in January, 1939. Lone Rider was a "knock-off" of... The Lone Ranger! To avoid impending lawsuit, the creators first named

Continued on page 10

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BELLA KIMELFELD CONTEST

Soooooooo... you think you know your comics?

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11. Which of the following books was not written by Dr. Fredric Wertham, M.D.? a. Television and Juvenile Delinquency b. Dark Legend c. The Show of Violence d. The Brain as an Organ

12. Which of the following was not a part of the originally adopted standards of The Comics Code Authority: Code for Editorial Matter: (Dialogue) a. No derogatory slang terms shall be used when describing individuals of different races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and/or national origins. b. Profanity, obscenity, smut, vulgarity or words or symbols which have acquired undesirable meanings are forbidden. c. Special precautions to avoid references to physical afflictions or deformities shall be taken. d. Although slang and colloquialisms are acceptable, excessive use should be discouraged and wherever possible good grammar shall be employed.

13. Ron Kar is: a. A "precursor" of sorts to Manhunter from Mars. b. A "precursor" of sorts to Captain Comet c. A "precursor" of sorts to Adam Strange. d. A "precursor" of sorts to Tommy Tomorrow.

14. Scrooge McDuck's parent's names were: a. Scottie and Mable b. Angus and Matilda c. Quackly and Hilda d. Fergus and Myra.

Continued on page 75

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 8

the feature "Lightning and the Lone Ranger" after the hero's horse.

I don't like to say anything against the Black Rider (since he is one of my all time favorite comic book characters) but it looks like Marvel Comics most definitely designed him to fool the kids into thinking that he was the Durango Kid. The Durango Kid series of Western movies was one of the most popular Columbia Pictures produced during the 1940's. ME did a successful comic book version with photos of the series star (Charles Starret as Durango) on the cover. The cover of Black Rider #8 (#1) featured a photo of a model dressed up as Black Rider, a costume very similar to Durango's. They also had a cover blurb saying that the comic had a "movie length story" further confusing the two characters.

I would be glad to make Michelle Nolan a color photo copy of my Flame #2 if she'd like. Maybe she could make me a copy of the Black Cobra issue I'm missing. Also looking for color copies of Yankee Girl in Captain Flight #8. CBM gets better with each issue! Best

Bill Black, Florida

Your reprints of Phantom Lady and other good girl comics are excellent, Bill. I, along with Nicky Wright and Stephen Gentner, would like to express our sincerest thanks for all your help and support with CBM #25!

Sticker Shock

As a new subscriber to CBM I really appreciated the articles on the Blackhawks and the Phantom Lady. I lived and read my way through the Golden Age but have been away from comics for 20 years. I'm happy to see a magazine like yours devoted to Golden Age comics (and Silver!) I appreciate comic art and am a reader, not an investor. I am shocked at present prices for Golden Age comics. Isn't there anyplace for those of us who aren't investors but who want to see and read old comics? I would be happy to pay for the privilege of looking at Golden Age comics or trading for them as we used to do. Sincerely,

Gary Rich, California

A few of the larger college libraries have materials, but by and large the only way to read much of the older books is to either buy it or borrow it from a fellow collector. And, of course there are some excellent reprint books like the DC archives.

AF #15

I wish to challenge the supposition by market reporter Dan Greenhalgh of Wallingford, Connecticut. In regards to Amazing Fantasy #15, Dan suggested that in the highest grades AF #15 might rival Detective #27 and Action #1 in the years to come. I have a different view! His own sales of Amazing Fantasy #15 ranged from $2,000 to $14,000. Many of his copies sold for less than $3,000. One of your advertisers is offering well over a quarter of a million for the Action #1 and Detective #27 in top grades. On a similar note... in a letter to the editor many months ago I suggested my top condition Amazing Spider-Man #1 might be available for a good Action #1. No offers were forthcoming!

Richard M. Brown, Michigan

Different strokes for different folks I guess! What do you think, readers... will the value of Silver Age keys ever rival the value of Golden Age keys?

Ahhh Memories

In "Oddball Archie Part II" (CBM #24) Scott Shaw suggested that Lil Ambrose never appeared in the teenage Archie Comics. However, I think I've found an example.

When I was growing up my Dad always bought me Archie Comics to read and I've always had a fondness for Little Archie too. Sometime in the 1980s I was reading an Archie Comic (I can't remember what title, but most likely Pep) and I came across a story where Little Ambrose returns to Riverdale for a visit. From what I remember the story goes like this:

News comes over to Archie and the gang that Ambrose is coming back for a visit. This makes Archie think back to when Ambrose left Riverdale. Ambrose's parents were moving and apparently it was out of the United States because they left on a ship. Anyway, Ambrose wanted Archie to come see him off and he said he would. But when the day came, Archie

watched from afar because Ambrose was about to board the ship looking back hoping Archie would show up but never did. Then Archie got scared and imagined Ambrose being this huge muscle bound guy now holding a grudge all of those years from everybody picking on him.

Anyway as the days go by waiting for him to show up the gang are all ready to throw him a surprise party for his return at the Choc. Shoppe. When he arrives, Archie is not there. He goes to find Archie and ask him why he didn't show up and Archie explained what he thought and how bad he felt. Ambrose then told him that's not what he remembers about Archie, he remembers him being a great friend and someone he looked up to. Then they go to the party.

It really was a classic Archie story and if I remember correctly, it was drawn by one of the better artists. I hope that Scott finds this issue and gets to read it so he can tie up the mystery. And if he finds it, tell him to tell me, I'd like to buy it and read it again. Ahhh memories.

Chance Fiveash, Georgia

The Bible Of Comics

Comic Book Marketplace #25 was another enjoyable issue. Being largely a super hero fan, I was interested to learn more about the Phantom Lady from Fox.

Your story on Overstreet Annual collecting was great! Jack Mallette also did a fine job detailing the plight of a fan trying to collect an entire run of "The Guide." I agree with you on the fact that Overstreet #7 is very difficult to find in nice shape. I also remember that in those days, there weren't many comics publications readily available (I had yet to be exposed to the amateur publications), so I read the Overstreet Guide from cover to cover frequently. It was and still is truly the "bible" of comics.

I always enjoy the Market Reports; if at all possible give us more of that. It's always beneficial to the fans to see what is hot in other areas of the country. Matt Schiffman does a great job keeping us posted as well. Keep up the good work!! Sincerely,

Paul Stefanowicz, New Jersey

2 Ft. Of Rope?

I loved the Phantom Lady issue. I have seen a great deal of Phantom Lady reprints from Americomics and I don't get the impression that she had a penchant for bondage. DC's Wonder Woman and Marvel's Spider Woman sure did.

The issues I have seen have her (PL) in a rather tame "wrists tied behind her back and ankles tires together. I've not even seen her gagged and doubt that she ever was. That she was tied up in each issue is also false perspective.

My point is that Phantom Lady is portrayed as a bondage lover... that she never was. Just once I would like to read a PL article without the word "bondage" included. Give her the "protection" Wonder Woman gets.

Publish every panel of Phantom Lady bound and gagged throughout her life and I'll slip into something more impractical (her costume) and act it out!

I would figure that two feet of rope (and no gag) would be all that I needed to recreate every one. Indeed, nothing to drool over and I would most likely get loose. PS The thought of me in a Phantom Lady costume, however, IS something to drool over.

Jen Ny, New York

Your points are well taken, Jen.

Infantino Simians

I really enjoyed the article on Detective Chimp in your last issue. In a world that seems to revolve around super-types, I found the piece an excellent change from the norm. I agree with you and Ms. Nolan completely... no one can draw simians the way Carmine Infantino draws them (with the possible exception of M. Anderson). Mr. Infantino really shines when it comes to the futuristic and super-scientific armor and weaponry used by intelligent apes and chimps. To use quote from own Silver Age article's "nobody but nobody draws simians better than Carmine Infantino!"

Randy Lopez, Arizona

...but nobody!

Matt Baker

I must write and give praise to several articles in CBM issue twenty five (with Phantom Lady on the cover). Nicky Wright and Steve Gentner did an amazing job covering different yet related aspects of the topic. I especially liked the quotes about Matt

continued on page 79

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101 FN/VF $465

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10 VF $300
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20 VF $275
24 NM $250

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Adventure into Mystery

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6 VF $80

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31 VF $60

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20 FN/VF $120
22 FN/VF $100
27 FN/VF $90
28 VG/FN $60
29 FN- $6
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32 FN $90
33 FN/VF $90
34 FN $65
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8 FN $25
9 VF $35
12 FN $25
14 FN $25
18 FN/VF $30
19 NM $40
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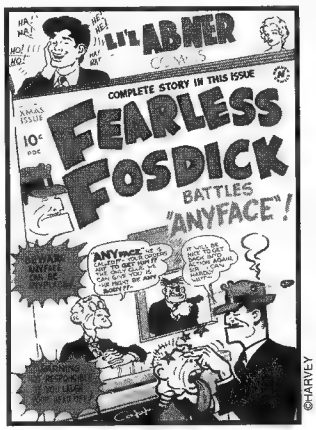
Far Out, Brilliant, & Wacky!

Since the first installment of "Adventures Into Weird Words" was published back in *CBM* #2, this column has most often concerned itself with fantasy, under a broad definition, occasionally pointing out humor classics that cross-over and do double-time as exemplary fantasies as well. Such is the case with the three featured books here: one serves as a prime example of the kind of comic strip satire that later would make MAD famous, the second is from a series that, while designed seemingly for younger children, is certainly "far-out" enough to amuse older readers as well. The third is a particularly brilliant issue of one of the greatest funny animal titles and characters ever.

The first entry, *Li'l Abner* #68 (January, 1949), contains a full-length novel of Al Capp's Dick Tracy parody- Fearless Fosdick. But Capp (yes- these are reprinted newspaper strips by the master himself) goes beyond satire. Fosdick is Li'l Abner's favorite comic strip. And in Abner's world, Fosdick's creator, Lester Gooch, has been committed to an asylum where he continues to suffer from terrifying nightmares. When one of the doctors tries to distract him with a pen and a pad of paper, Gooch grabs it and locks himself into a small dark broom closet. The screaming stops, replaced by the sound of a pen scratching on paper.



Then, at exact 24-hour intervals, a piece of paper slides out from the crack below the closet door, and the Fosdick strip resumes. This adventure pits the dim detective against "the most incredible character in the annals of comic strip horror!" Anyface is a silly-putty villain who can arrange his features into any shape. This master of disguise is also a mass-murderer. The bumbling manhunt, as Fosdick "bumps off" suspect after suspect, only to have them all posthumously proven innocent by Anyface's remaining on the loose, is itself hilarious, and the interspersed sequences in Abner's world- including Abner himself being straight-jacketed when he gets overwhelmed by the suspense of Fosdick's dilemma- makes it a unique comic strip achievement.

The story takes up most of a 52-page comic; the filler strip is a typical-teenager-thing of little consequence. The inside front cover is a special Al Capp Abner strip written in rebuttal to the arguments in favor of comic book censorship that were gathering force at that time. To deny children horror stories is to deny them Poe, Dickens, Shakespeare, and Mother Goose! Of course what happened- happened, but Capp was an eloquent defender of the faith. The Abner title was published by Harvey Comics, who also published *Dick Tracy*! Let me conclude my words on this comic by calling Fearless Fosdick vs. Anyface the funniest story I've ever read.

Jingle Jangle #4 (August, 1943) has a wonderful cover, featuring George Carlson's Pie-Face Prince of Pretzelburg. Most issues of Eastman Color's *Jingle Jangle* (which ran 42 issues through 1949) included a Pie-Face Prince story, and also offered Carlson's *Jingle Jangle Tales*. He only did the first six covers, but as the one for #4 shows, he had the knack. The cobwebbed moon, the face and tie on the anchor, and that wacky scissor-bird in the upper left- are all exquisite touches and well-indicative of what waits inside. (How about the key in the anchor? and yes- one of the houses does have a pretzel on the roof!) Dimwitri (the P-F Prince) leads off with a 7-page surrealistic assault on our funnybones that's jam-packed with such scenes as being captured by a band of wild lollipops (whose king is desperate for some "geranium pudding") and winning a dingabus in a raspberry raffle (a whimsical car that sprouts wings on page 7).

Like Lewis Carroll before him, whose Alice In Wonderland is as rewarding to advanced students of literature as it is to children, George Carlson's work

EVEN THE COVER OF LI'L ABNER #69 (Jan 1949) gets into the fantasy flip-flop of "Abner's world" and "Fosdick's world". Fosdick fans should be aware that *Li'l Abner* #95 also contains a Fosdick novel.

BY PAT S. CALHOUN

on these two strips through the eight years of *Jingle Jangle* stands ready to profoundly entertain anyone who gives it a chance. The rest of *Jingle Jangle* is rounded out by a stable of somewhat more ordinary funny animals and such, including good-hearted gremlins and dog detectives and a little girl named Hortense (who seems normal enough but has extraordinary things happen to her). This issue's Jingle Jangle Tale tells of a mahogany butler whose three wishes are stolen by Dr. Cornwall Cornelius Cornbeaf Corn, and it's as zany as it sounds. Carlson had been drawing kids' books for many years- he did many Uncle Wiggly books- so the Jingle Jangle work came towards the end of his career.

©EASTERN COLOR

JINGLE JANGLE #4 (AUG 1943) shows Dimwitri signing his name on a pie that knows which way the wind blows. George Carlson's cartooning is always full of little "value-added" visual details.

George Carlson was the subject of an article full of Harlan Ellison's fierce praise for this "artist of the absurd", that appeared in the famous anthology *All In Color For A Dime* in 1970. And Carlson was also one of the dozen creators chosen by the editors (Michael Barrier and Martin Williams) of the *Smithsonian Book of Comic Book Comics* in their selection of comic books at their best, published in 1981. So it's high time for another homage to this comics genius.

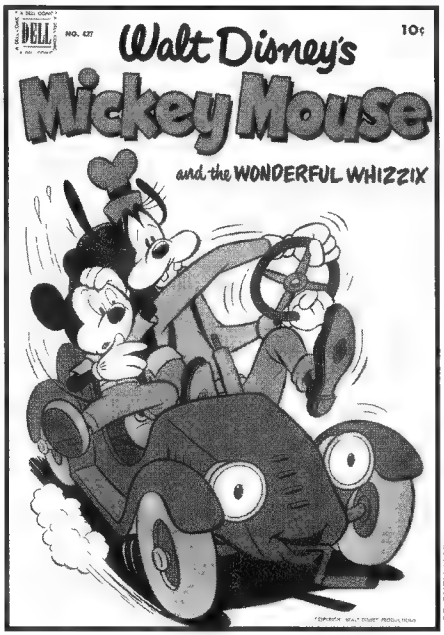
Poor Mickey Mouse- he's always standing in the shadow of the fact that Donald Duck was lucky enough to have the supreme funny-animal artist, Carl Barks, chronicle his career for 25 years. Not that all MM's adventures are second rate. Floyd Gottfredson, Bill Wright, Paul Murray, Dick Moores, and Romano Scarpa have all rendered the redoubtable rodent in truly memorable tales.

THE WONDERFUL WHIZZIX (*Four Color* #427, Oct 1952), fortunately for Mickey and Goofy, has a mind of its own that sometimes makes steering superfluous. Another Dick Moores classic that came out shortly before this one, is Goofy's Mechanical Wizard (*Four-Color* #401).

The Wonderful Whizzix, *Four Color* #427 (October, 1952), begins with Goofy buying a new car for $100. Mickey accompanies him to the out-of-the-way factory where he's supposed to pick up the car- only to discover that the Whiz Auto Factory has been closed down since 1907 and is rumored to be haunted. They go inside, and Goofy bumps a handle that starts an antiquated yet automated assembly line that does seem to spit out some sort of car at the end.

And, what a car! The Whizzix starts on command, and after (with a mind of its own) running a truck off the road, Mickey and Goofy discover that the truck was full of crooks. On the way home the Whizzix has another "incident" that slows down a gang of thieves long enough to be apprehended. Mickey realizes that the car's powers should be kept secret, but Goofy has leaked, and next morning Mortimer Wham, the president of the Wham Auto Factory, reads of the marvel mobile in the newspapers... and immediately sets out to destroy the Whizzix. Turns out that back in 1907 he had swindled Hezabiah Whiz out of his auto factory, and he knows that it is Hezabiah's ghost that powers the car.

He knocks Goofy (and the Whizzix) out by pumping ether into the garage, and sets out with a truck to tow the Whizzix off a cliff. Just in time, Goofy awakes, and wakes the Whizzix, and the spirited little car begins towing the truck in the other direction. Gathering speed and heading downtown, the Whizzix comes to a sudden halt in front of the police station, and Mr. Wham flies straight into a jail cell, where he confesses and signs over half his fortune to the Whiz family. Thereafter the Whizzix becomes an ordinary car- an ordinary 1907 car at that!



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This 24-page Whizzix adventure by Dick Moores (of Jim Hardy and Gasoline Alley fame) is a thoroughly satisfying story. It was, in fact, the inspiration for the Herbie "Love Bug" movie series. The 8-page back-up story is an instantly forgettable MM escapade, which does nothing to lessen my opinion a bit of *Four Color* #427 as one of my favorite Disney comics. ■

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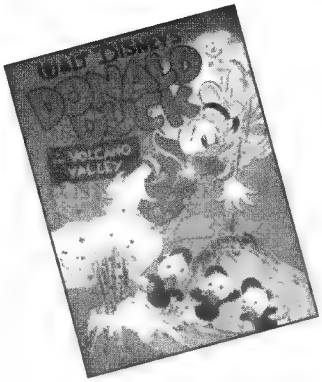

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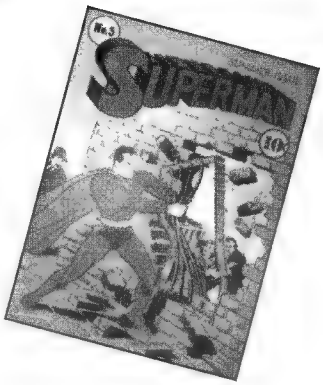

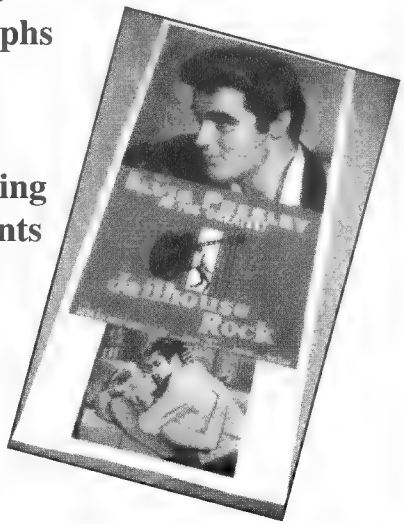

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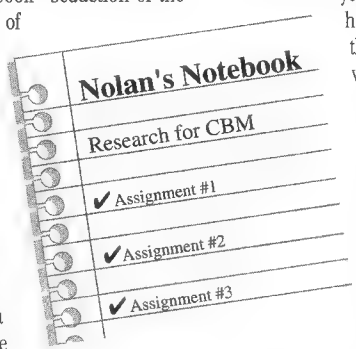
1956... It was a very good year!

You have probably read the claim a dozen times — that most post-Code comic books from the mid-1950s are "just so much watered-down, adulterated pap." The party line, especially from folks who started reading comics in the Marvel Age of the 1960s, is that mid-50s material is "dull, lifeless, and generally suffering from censorship when compared with the comics produced only a few years earlier." Not so! At least not all the time.

So let's take a much closer look and see what was really happening in 1956, the year after the Comics Code Authority symbol first appeared on almost all newsstand comic books (except for the Dell titles and Classic Illustrated publications). Were comics really so much worse than what had gone before?

Comic book historians have often seemed intent on connecting the supposed "pabulum" of the eight-year post-1954, pre-Marvel Comics period with Dr. Fredric Wertham and his book "Seduction of the Innocent", along with the ensuing creation of the Comics Code, comic book circulation plunges, and distribution problems. To be sure, it was sad, indeed, that the Comics Code resulted in the demise of EC Comics. And if you liked only horror comics in the early 1950s — or if that's all you care about now — there's no question that the Comics Code, well, horrifies you.



Otherwise, though, there is a whole world of well-crafted, period-piece comics to explore from the mid-1950s. In fact, 1956 was a seminal year in comics, and not just because the Silver Age began (at least in the minds of most fans) with the introduction of the Silver Age Flash in *Showcase* #4 (September/October, 1956). The day that issue of *Showcase* hit the stands (I was there to buy it as an 8-year-old collector) there were dozens of other wonderful comics on the racks. They weren't horror comics, to be sure, but they weren't horrible, either!

Drives Me Nuts!

The introductory essay by Paul Kupperberg in DC's recent "Essential Showcase" trade paperback is typical of what drives me nuts about critics of the period (most of whom weren't there). He writes well about the *Showcase* series itself, but he purveyed the usual party line "dogma" about the period of 1956 itself. He writes that comic books were "barely hanging on" in 1956, but in reality there were significantly more comics produced in 1956 than during any year in the 1960s, as I will soon show. If anything, comic book circulation was considerably higher in 1956 than during the 1960s!

There's no question (as Paul writes) that comics suffered from a "government-induced paranoia on the part of parents" but he adds an incorrect parenthetical aside when he says, "parents who, I might add, probably grew up reading comics themselves in the industrial heyday of the World War II years with few, it any, adverse affects (sic)."

If anything, the big public-relations problems for comics then was that comics had never had ANY effect on most of the parents of 6-to-12-year-olds in 1956, because they were then too old to have grown up with all but the earliest comics. Most of the fathers and mothers of, say, 10-year-olds in 1956 were born circa 1920-25 or earlier; someone born as late as 1925 would have been only 21 in 1946. Which means that such a parent, if he or she read comics at all, probably had given up reading comics by 1940, when comics were still in their infancy. (Soldiers read comics during World War II, of course, but the point I'm making is that most parents of comic-reading youngsters in 1956 were too old to have been influenced by comics during their childhoods.)

But Kupperberg's essay really "misses the mark" when he writes that "Timely Comics had tried reviving their super hero line in the early 1950s, an experiment that didn't last long and ended in their changing their name to Atlas and producing about a dozen war and horror titles that came and went as fast as sales reports came in. With the rare exception of work by such men as Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, there was little in comic books to get excited about during much of the 1950s."

Whew! A more mistaken interpretation of the period has never been printed, even if you ignore the amazing slight to more than a dozen great artists who were working for DC alone during the period (check out the war and fantasy comics, for example). Timely's Atlas imprint (standing for its distribution company) had already been in use on all their comics for nearly two years when Captain America, the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner first reappeared in *Young Men* #24 (Dec., 1953, which barely qualifies as the "early 1950s"). And many of the Marvel/Atlas horror and war titles had long, stable runs until the Atlas implosion during the summer of 1957.

It isn't just nostalgia that prompts me

BY MICHELLE NOLAN

IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR!

Nolan Picks...

20 KEY ISSUES FROM 1956

(The FN condition value is listed for each book)

Showcase #4

(Sep/Oct) - Introduction of Silver Age Flash and the first acknowledgment in any DC comic that there had been a Golden Age. Barry Allen is shown reading an old issue of Flash Comics. This sparked a bit of early interest/nostalgia. (FN: approx. $4,200)

Detective Comics #233

(Jul) - The introduction of Batwoman in Batman. An overlooked but important SA development, occurring in the July issue, well before the reintroduction of The Flash. (FN: $375)

Uncle Scrooge #15

(Sep) - The introduction of Flintheart Glomgold. Many Barks collectors rank at or near the top of their favorites. Has there ever been a funnier, yet more profound story in the history of comics than "The Second Richest Duck"? (FN: $45)

Lone Ranger Movie Story Giant

(Mar) - Clayton Moore's Lone Ranger photo-cover debut. Moore's reedy voice and iron-willed portrayal of the Lone Ranger remain one of the seminal memories for any Baby Boomer. A western classic. (FN approx. $90)

Sugar & Spike #1

(Apr/May) - Sheldon Mayer's inimitable cartoon kids begin a delightful 98-issue run at DC. Their comics remain among the most fun to read (and hard to find) of all. (FN: $240)

Plastic Man #64

(Nov) - Other than DC characters, Plastic Man was the only Golden Age super hero to retain his own title through 1956 (until Quality Comics folded). As such, a case can be made that this is the last "Golden Age" comic. (FN: $60)

Tales of the Unexpected #1
& House Of Secrets #1

(Feb, Mar and Nov-Dec) - The fifth and sixth, respectively, of DC's "Big Six" anthology series of science fiction, mystery, and (early on) horror. First issues of underrated but highly collectible series, and scarce, to boot. (TOTU #1 FN approx. $240, HOS #1 FN $180)

Batman #100

(Jun) - The second DC anniversary issue, following Superman #100 in 1955. For some reason, old Batman covers are not reprinted - a strange decision, because the covers of Superman #1, #25, #50 and #75 are pictured on Superman #100, minus any reference to the page count but the first such reprinting of old DC covers. The first hint to younger collectors of DC's rich heritage? (FN approx. $340)

Jackie Gleason & The Honeymooners #1

(Jun/Jul) - A late comer to the ranks of TV comics, but one of the most faithful to the original show. This title is based on one of the funniest shows in history and still holds up astonishing well today. (FN: approx. $200)

Tales of the Mysterious Traveler #1

(Aug) - No Steve Ditko art in this issue, but a landmark for Charlton, nevertheless. (FN: approx. $85)

Nature Boy #3

(Mar) - With some uneven but interesting work by John Buscema, this was the first issue of the only original super hero to be given his own title in 1956. It lasted three issues. Also the last appearance of the Blue Beetle until 1964. (FN: approx. $50)

Yellow Claw #1

(Oct) - A book, and concept, either 30 years behind or ahead of its time. Joe Maneely's striking cover and art makes this an unforgettable comic, especially for anyone who first saw it as a child. The only villain to be given his own comic in 1956. What a concept! (FN: $125)

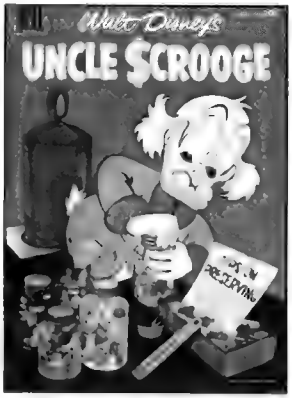
Little Archie #1

(1956) - Bob Bolling's wonderfully whimsical introduction of characters who remained immensely popular for a long time. One of the most collectible issues of 1956, and perhaps the scarcest to find in high grade. One of the most underrated and collectible comics of all time! (FN: $145)

Four Color #735 "Crusader Rabbit"

(Oct) - A nice memento of one of the great cartoon series of the 1950s. (FN: $75)

to write this. Check out the lists and commentary that accompany this column, and see if you don't agree! And if you've never exposed yourself to some of these 1956 comics, give them a try. It might open up a new collecting world for you. I've read and researched more than 7,000 of these fascinating books over the years and I'm here to tell you, they're good!



A New Case For 1959

Rather than think of 1956 as the beginning of the Silver Age, I really think a much better case could be made for 1959 as the start of the Silver era. There was the debut of Supergirl, the beginning of regular appearances for the Flash, Adam Strange, and Space Ranger, the debut of Sgt. Rock and the new Green Lantern, and the growth in popularity of the first Silver Age team, the *Challengers of the Unknown*, who were in their second full year.

Instead, I prefer to think of 1956 as the last year of the Golden Age. I know, I know, the Golden Age really ended (take your pick) with the end of World War II in 1945 or with the end of the original run of *All-Star* (with the Justice Society) in 1951. But 1956 was still heavily steeped in comics and companies that began in the 1940s. In fact, the comics of 1956 in general had a lot more in common with the comics and pop culture of the 1940s than that of the 1960s. (The same could be said for most of the music and many other aspects of popular culture.) More than 100 titles still being published in 1956 began no later than the 1940s... and so did

every major comic book publisher!

To be sure, comics in 1956 were dominated by the six companies that were to become virtually the entire industry in the next two decades — Marvel, DC, Dell (Western Publishing), Harvey, Charlton, and Archie. But all of these companies had their roots either in the late 1930s or early 1940s, with the exception of Charlton (which published a smattering of comics in the second half of the 1940s but basically replaced Fawcett on the list of leading publishers starting in 1954, when Charlton expanded greatly by purchasing the rights to most of the Fawcett titles).

But did you know that no fewer than 13 other companies (all but one with origins in the Golden Age) still survived in 1956 to publish at least 14 issues each? Thanks to Dan Stevenson, an indefatigable indexer from Southern California with whom I have worked for the past decade, we can see how 1956 was the last year of true diversity in the comic book marketplace, even though both "horror" comics and super hero titles were at an all-time low that year.

Stevenson has researched a list of 2,058 newsstand comic books published in 1956, give or take a dozen issues or so that may or may not exist or are dated December, 1955/ January, 1956. (The latter category only affects the few comics on the cusp of 1955-56 or 1956-57).

Of those 2,058 issues, no fewer than 1,482 were published by the "Big Six" companies, or slightly less than 75 percent. But compare that to the year 1959, when comic totals had plunged to only 1,510 issues (in large part because of the 1957 Marvel/Atlas implosion, which reduced the company's output from an industry-leading 431 issues in 1956 to only 96 in 1958, the first full year in which DC took control of Marvel's distribution arrangements).

In 1959, the "Big Six" published all but 126 issues, or 92 percent of all comics! In my book, 1956 remains a significantly more interesting year for comics overall.

'Twas TV Killed The Beast!

Stevenson, with the help of numerous other collectors, especially Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr. and this columnist, has meticulously researched and confirmed the existence of comic books throughout every decade of their existence. And Stevenson's totals confirm what I have always believed — it wasn't the Comics Code that diminished the market in the 1950s, but television and an increasing number of other cultural "distractions".

The proof? OK, here it is, with one minor caveat: Stevenson's totals are always subject to statistically insignificant revisions, because there remain a handful of yet-to-be researched issues that may or may not exist throughout comic book history. From 1945, for which 1,146 issues are listed, the total number of newsstand comics grew steadily every year, with a temporary stagnation in 1950, until it reached the staggering number of 3,162 issues in 1952, which coincided with the height of the horror/crime boom.

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From that point on, the number of comics published —and doubtless total circulation, as well—dropped every year until it reached 1,510 in 1959. Not since the days of wartime paper restrictions in 1945 had so few issues been published! Now, these numbers are especially significant when it's considered that comic books were among the few pop cultural creations that did NOT benefit from the sheer numbers of the Baby Boomers, who

NOLAN PICKS

Showcase #1
(Mar/Apr) - The historic beginning of a new concept (a tryout comic for Silver Age characters) Ironically, the character in #1, Fireman Farrell, flopped. (FN: $630)

Classics Illustrated #133 "The Time Machine"
(Jul) - This adaptation of the classic story by H.G. Wells appeared four years before the movie (but sold like crazy when the movie came out, since Classics were endlessly reprinted and/or recycled). Nice art by Lou Cameron. (FN: $15)

Incredible Science Fiction #33
(Jan/Feb) - The last EC comic book; what more need be said? It was recently reprinted. (FN: $90)

Donald Duck #46 "The Secret of Hondurica"
(Mar/Apr) - One of the last full-length Carl Barks stories to appear outside the pages of Uncle Scrooge. (FN: $65)

Four Color #709 "The Searchers"
(Jun) - A John Wayne photo-cover from a truly great western film. A scarce issue. (FN: $85)

10 GREAT MONTHLY TITLES OF 1956

Adventure Comics #220-231
Superboy, Green Arrow and Aquaman. The last of the true superhero anthology titles.

Adventures Into the Unknown #70-79
Want to see how to tell a good story in 6 or 8 pages? Check out these wonderfully hokey fantasy stories, actually much better than most of the horror stories they replaced. (10 issues but published monthly).

All-American Men of War #29-40
Grandenetti, Heath, Kubert...simply great stuff even if you are not a war comics fan.

Astonishing #45-56
Almost every story in every issue done by an outstanding artist such as Krigstein.

Blackhawk #96-107
Lot's of fun at the very end of Quality's excellent "Cold War" run. DC takes over the title with #108.

continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

Blondie #86-97
Brilliantly written and hysterically funny Harvey title.

Detective Comics #227-238
Batman, the earliest adventures of the Martian Manhunter (#227 his 3rd appearance). Batman stories are better than average for the period.

Forbidden Worlds #40-49
A clone of Adventures Into The Unknown, also written by the prolific Richard Hughes for the American Comics Group, and just as much fun. (10 issues but published monthly).

Hopalong Cassidy #109-120
Lots of nice Gil Kane art.

Kid Colt #56-67
The Kid was still riding high for Atlas in those days. An unusually popular western, considering the character was original and not a television or movie takeoff.

The Lone Ranger #91-102
These stories prove that "Dell Comics Are Good Comics".

Margie's Little Lulu # 91-102
An example of good storytelling without excessive balance. If the bad guys never took advantage of the Lone Ranger, the bad boys never took advantage of Little Lulu. The feminist manifesto of the 1950s!

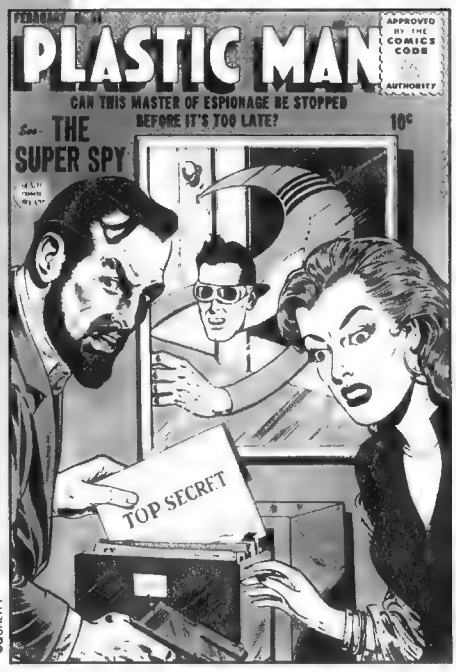
Marvel Tales #142-153
The art of the short story perfected by Stan Lee.

Our Army at War # 42-53
For some reason, a lot of these issues are among the toughest series to find. Like the other three DC war titles of 1956, though, they are magnificent in their simplicity.

Real Screen Comics #94-105
The Fox & Crow and Flippity & Flop in the same book make for a great DC humor title.

Continued

were born between 1946 and 1964! Most Baby Boom readers never saw a real horror comic and almost none of them were old enough to actually read or understand one. No child born in the 1950s ever lamented (at least until much, much later) "I would read a lot more comic books... if only they hadn't discontinued all those great old horror comics in 1954!"



If anything (the Comics Code notwithstanding), the Baby Boom should have resulted in a huge surge in the growth of comics, beginning right around the mid-1950s and continuing all the way into the 1970s. Look what the Boomers did elsewhere. Such a surge, however, did not occur... but instead the opposite occurred, with the exception of the creation of the Marvel Universe in the early 1960s. Stevenson counts 23,349 comics published in the 1950s, but only 14,857 in the 1960s. Considering there were so many more potential readers in the 1960s than the 1950s (thanks to all the children born in the '50s), that's a truly staggering drop from one decade to the next. I submit that even if the Comics Code had never been created, there would have been a major decline in comic book circulation... and the primary culprit was the growing popularity of television.

The Last Golden Age Comic?

By the end of 1956, six significant Golden Age companies had gone out of the comic book business after publishing their last issue that year — Quality, Ace, Lev Gleason, Avon, Eastern, and EC. Several minor companies, most notably Superior, Stanmor, and the short-lived Argo, also expired in 1956. Ziff-Davis staggered into 1957 with the last three issues of GI Joe. St. John, Magazine Enterprises, and Ajax-Farrell made it into 1958 with a few issues, and Pines (Standard/Nedor) survived until 1959 before selling Dennis the Menace to Hallden. But, in effect, all of those long-standing companies also were on their last legs (with regard to their comic book publishing divisions), yet they still were significant players in the 1956 market. That's what helps make 1956 so interesting, even though admittedly most of the best single issues came from one of the "Big Six" companies.

It's especially intriguing to note that at the same time what many feel is the first "Silver Age" comic (*Showcase* #4) was on the stands, what I feel was the last "Golden Age" comic made its final appearance. That comic is *Plastic Man* #64 (November, 1956), one of Quality's last comics. The lead story, "The Invisible Raiders", was reprinted from *Plastic Man* #45 (March, 1954); for that matter, I believe almost all the 1955-56 *Plastic Man* issues were reprints, though I have not confirmed it. I have all seven *Plastic Man* issues from 1956, and all the stories look like reprint material. Plastic Man was the last Non-DC Golden Age super hero title to make it into 1956 (unless you want to count the Blackhawks as super heroes). And, even though DC did acquire the rights to Plas, the stretchable sleuth didn't reappear under the DC banner for a decade.

It's also worth noting that the Blue Beetle also made it into 1956, in one truly awful new story in the first issue of the short-lived

Nature Boy from Charlton (#3, March, 1956, one of the scarcest of all 1950s comics). Nature Boy was the only original, non-DC super powered hero introduced in 1956, and he lasted only three issues. Charlton apparently acquired the rights for Blue Beetle from Fox along with some hideous reprint material. In late 1954 and early 1955, Blue Beetle appeared in *Space Adventures* #13 and #14 (reprints), and in *Blue Beetle* #18-21 (#18-19 were reprints), which were a number continuation of the horror title "The Thing". And that's why Charlton was able to revive the Blue Beetle in 1964, and why DC wound up with the rights when DC eventually bought out Charlton's heroes.

So the next time someone suggests that "the code killed comics" or "post code 1950s comics are just so much watered-down, adulterated pap" consider the information above. I feel that collectors, fans, and historians can really enhance their appreciation of the comic book media by re-examining and questioning the "party line" of comic book history so often repeated in the fan press.

Thanks for reading... see you next issue. ■

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STRANGE ADVENTURES
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SCIENCE FANS MASQUERADE PARTY
IT'S MIDNIGHT! UNMASK, EVERYBODY, AND REVEAL YOUR IDENTITIES!
I'M TRAPPED! I HAVE NO MASK TO TAKE OFF--I'M REALLY A MARTIAN!
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AN OBSCURE POST-CODE Quality comic... *Plastic Man* #59 (Feb 1956, facing page).

THE MARTIAN MASQUERADER on the cover of *Strange Adventures* #67 (Apr 1956, left) is a great example of the many aliens who populated the covers of Silver Age DC books.

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the United States and has contributed volumes of data to the Overstreet Price Guide.

Roy Rogers #97-108
Photo covers and two stories in each issue by John Buscema. A nifty series.

Star Spangled War Stories #41-52
Another great DC war series.

Strange Adventures #64-75
DC science fiction, always excellent, is more often "whimsically" presented in this title during '56.

Uncanny Tales #39-50
Twist endings from Atlas, plus the usual fine art.

Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #208-219
Huey, Dewey and Louie at their peak!

20 GREAT NON-MONTHLY TITLES OF 1956

Adv. of Rex the Wonder Dog #25-30
Rex & Detective Chimp!

All-Star Western #86-91
The Trigger Twins, Johnny Thunder, & Pow Wow Smith

Archie #78-83
Great cover gags, especially the baseball cover.

Archie's Girls Betty & Veronica #22-27
I always felt sorry for Betty, but she didn't feel sorry for herself.

Brave and Bold #3-8
Daring doings and some of the best art of the period.

Dennis the Menace #14-19
If you read these, you'll be hooked.

Flippity & Flop #25-30
Often done better Tweety & Sylvester.

Fox & the Crow #30-37
Funny animal fan or not... these will make you laugh!

Frontier Fighters # 3-8
Joe Kubert's Buffalo Bill stories are wonderful.

Jann of the Jungle #9-14
About as sexy as a woman was allowed to appear in 1956.

Katie Keene #26-31
The height of "fun with fashion".

Lorna the Jungle Girl #17-22
Good stories, solid art., tough toned down, still fun.

Mystery in Space #29-34
The best science fiction title of the 1950s... and those covers! Wow!

Our Fighting Forces #8-16
Like any DC war comic from 1956... OFF is superior.

Plastic Man # 58-64
The end of Quality, the end of the GA.

Spellbound #26-31
You'll guess most of the endings, but not all.

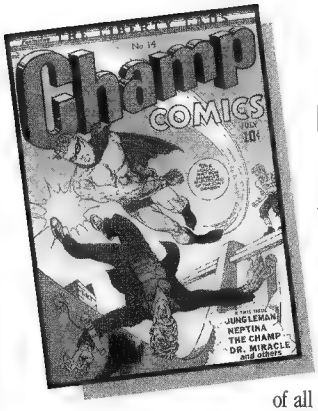
Tomahawk #37-44
Really the only comic like it during the period.

Two-Gun Kid # 29-34
How the West was won-derful for Atlas.

Wonder Woman # 79-86
10 year old boys usually hated these, but the girls loved her. WW was one of the few GA titles that survived the numerous cuts and cancellations of the previous decade.

World's Finest #80-85
Superman and Batman together when the idea was still novel and fresh.

The Human Meteor
Duke O'Dowd



CHAMP #14 (JUL 1941) This version of the Human Meteor looks like Reed Crandall's work, but, whoever it is, the draftsmanship is excellent.

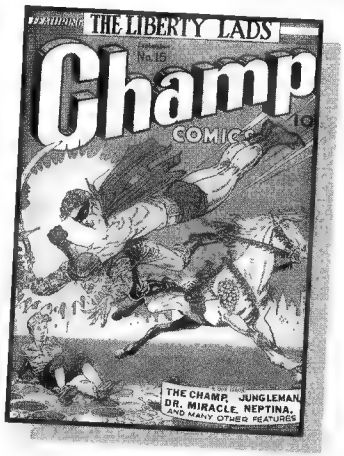
by Jon Berk

Question: What do the Foreign Legion, Texas, Tibet, and a taxi cab have in common? Answer: Duke O'Dowd, who streaked across the pages of *Champion/Champ Comics* as the "Human Meteor".

Obscure in the pantheon of super-heroes who romped about the Golden Age, O'Dowd underwent one of the slowest transformations to a super-hero of all the characters who put on colorful pajamas. In his first appearance in *Champion Comics* #6 (April, 1940), we meet O'Dowd who is a happy-go-lucky Texan who has just joined the Foreign Legion. Before he joined the Legion, Duke was a crack air pilot and stuntman. His carefree manner and careless tongue often got him in trouble. After months of soldiering, Duke longs for the feel of an airplane and his homeland of Texas. His desire to return home is facilitated after he rescues the daughter of his commandant from some shifty sheiks in issue #7. As thanks for saving his daughter, the commandant discharges Duke from further service in the Legion. The story ends as Duke hitches a ride in a biplane heading to the U.S. via Manila.

Things really pick up in issue #8 as the plane Duke is in gets caught in a tornado in the Himalayas. (Yes, I said "a tornado in the Himalayas".) This Texas-size twister carries him and the plane higher and higher until it crashes on a plateau. His pilot dead, Duke finds himself alone in Bayakura, the lost city. There he is greeted as the "Great Deliverer". Bayakura is home to a scientifically advanced culture which has been isolated from the outside world by the same windstorms that almost killed Duke. Duke is taken to the city's leader, Len-lu, who is on his death bed. There, Len-lu anoints Duke as a force for good. "You will free your great outside world from the steadily increasing oppression of evil! You will be aided by unheard of powers that only our advanced knowledge of science and invention have made possible." Overwhelmed, Duke pledges to do his best, and, in the words of Duke, "An O'Dowd keeps his word!" Duke is introduced to Wah Le who gives Duke a "wonder belt" which will be the source of his powers. Its operation is explained as follows, "This wonder belt contains an ato-motor. Its radium emanations, exploding atoms, will rocket you through space. It also holds tiny storage batteries, powering an electric energizer to give you super-human strength and create a contra-magnetic field about you to destroy any metal weapon used against you."

Well, as soon as Duke strapped the wonder belt on, he is needed to defeat Frango and his cohorts who plot to take over the city upon the death of Len-lu. In his best fighting-Texan mode and with his new powers, Duke saves the city from the evil Frango. His new-found friend, Wah Le, is installed as the city's new leader.



Before leaving the breathless adventure of issue #8, the covers to this issue (and #9 and #10) deserve attention. These covers depicting the Human Meteor are little known, but are classic Golden Age covers. The first is by Joe Simon, and the last two are by Jack Kirby. Each cover exudes unbridled energy and dynamism. The obscurity of the title and this character have kept these covers "hidden" from collectors of the more well-known classic covers of the better-known titles and characters of this era. Reed Crandall also contributed some covers. Later covers were drawn by Simon under the name "John Henri". It is believed that many of the issues of this title are fairly rare. Note that the *Gerber Photo-Journal* does not even depict issues #20-#23. Of course, like many lower price Golden Age titles, a rise in price would determine their true scarcity. (Would a significant price rise bring more copies into the marketplace?)

The publishing history of this series is somewhat obscure. Issues #2 (there was no #1) through #10 of *Champion Comics* and issue #11 through #25 of *Champ Comics* (December, 1939 to October 1940) were published by Worth Publishing- for which no information is known. For a short period of time (issues #12-#17, February 1941 through February 1942) the series was published by "Champ Publishing Co." Again no information is known about this company. However, as of issue #18, this series came under the umbrella of Alfred Harvey, founder (in the 1950s) of the immensely popular titles of *Casper, Richie Rich, Little Dot*, etc. who decided to start publishing comics. His first venture was *Pocket Comics* (August, 1941). Harvey had met Joe Simon while Simon was the art director for Fox publications. Simon prepared the cover for this issue. Harvey also acquired *Speed Comics* and began publishing that series with issue #14 (September, 1941), again a pocket-size book. (According to Simon this concept was undermined when store owners complained that the reduced size made the books more susceptible to shop-lifting.) As of June, 1942, Harvey also began publishing *Green Hornet Comics*.

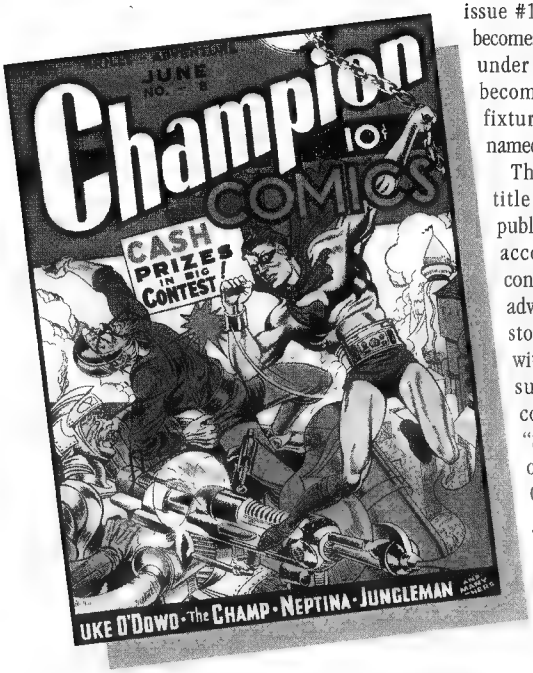
It appears that the earlier adventures of the Human Meteor were drawn by Louie Cazeneuve, while the later exploits were drawn by Arthur Peddy. Cazeneuve drew for many of the earliest golden age companies including Fox, Harvey, Centaur etc. (In fact, according to *Goulart's Great History of Comic Books*, Cazeneuve drew the Red Raven story for Timely.) Arthur Peddy also was deeply involved with the early Golden Age titles... drawing features for Fox, Fiction House, and Quality. He drew many of the early episodes of the original Phantom Lady.

CHAMP #15 (SEP 1941)
The Human Meteor streaks to Toby's rescue on another awesome cover. Once again, Reed Crandall is a good guess as the artist responsible for it.

CHAMPION #10 (AUG 1940)
Jack Kirby's bravura Human Meteor cover as seen on the Lamont Larson copy.

Champ & Champion ©Harvey Publ.

Meanwhile, back in Bayakura, Duke is given a new outfit by Wah Le, more in keeping with the respectable super-hero of the day. Viewing criminal activity on the telovox, Duke leaves on his quest to suppress evil. Streaking to New York he makes short work of a gang that has plunged the city into darkness. His contra-magnetic field comes in handy to repel bullets. However, Duke discovers the field has no effect on wood. (Move over Green Lantern!) By



issue #11 (October, 1940) he becomes a cab driver and takes under his wing (what had become a popular comic fixture) a boy companion named Toby.

The middle issues of this title suffered from spotty publication which probably accounts for the inconsistent quality of these adventures. Many of these stories involved intrigue with fifth columnists and such. Stories included confrontation with the "Scaly Dragon", a band of Japanese saboteurs in Cincinnati, thwarting Japanese spies who paint the top of buildings in Los Angeles to guide bombing runs, and battling Gestapo agents and their fiendish plans on the American shores. By the beginning of World War II, Duke and Toby were in full swing protecting the shores of the U.S.A. from foreign enemies. Nearing the end of the run, Duke finally took his fight against the Nazis to Europe. However, this was not enough to save the title which folded two issues later (#25; April, 1943). Although of no lasting impact or importance, "The Human Meteor" was yet another "Brief But Bold" thread in the colorful tapestry of the Golden Age. ■

Jon Berk is the president of the AACC and is a nationally known comicbook collector, researcher, and historian. Jon's first love is early Golden Age.

CHAMPION #8 (JUN 1940)
Joe Simon's Human Meteor cover is early Golden Age action art at its most exuberant.

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Amaz. Spid. #129 VF- $190
Amaz. Spid. #129 F+ $125
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Amaz. Spid. #316 VF $16
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Fant. Four #27 F+ $60
Fant. Four #46 F+ $35
Fant. Four #48 G $95
Fant. Four #50 F- $90
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Batman #123 VG+ $64
Batman #126 VG $50
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Green Lantern #29 VF+ $81
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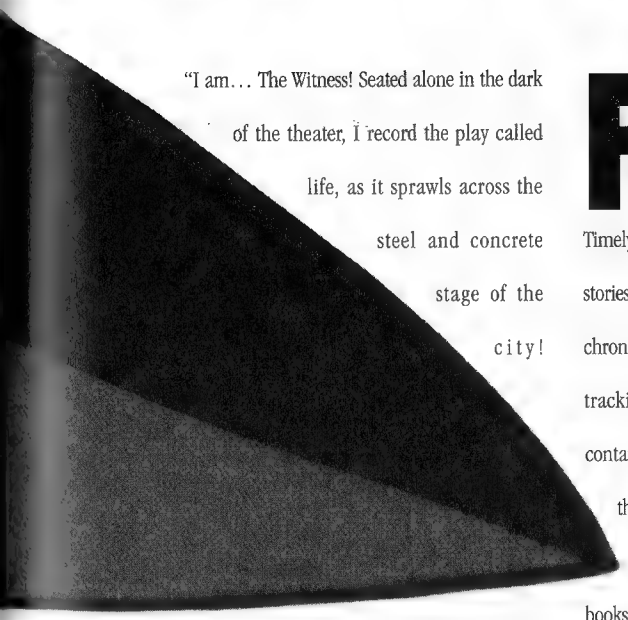
By Gary M. Carter
with Richard Evans

WITNESS



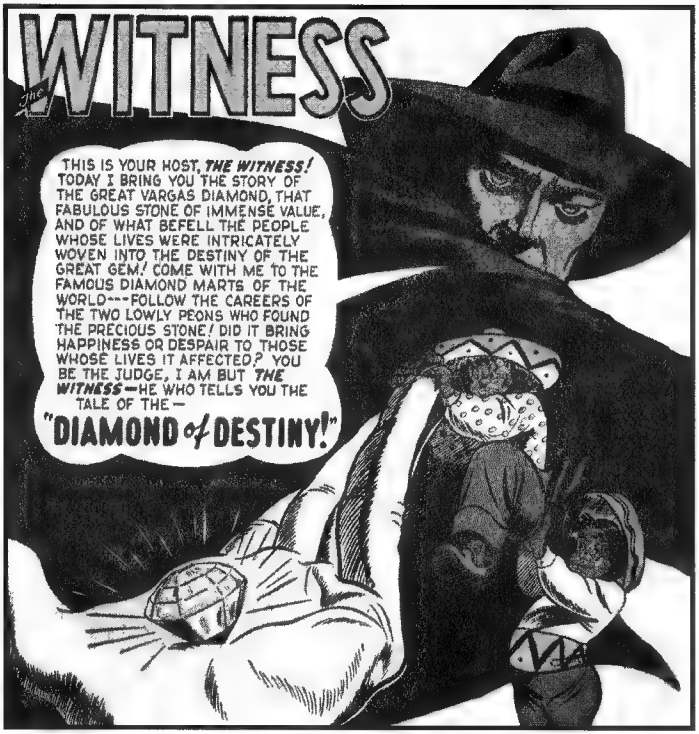
"I am... The Witness! Seated alone in the dark of the theater, I record the play called life, as it sprawls across the steel and concrete stage of the city!

Before the glittering footlights of street lamps, in front of the curtain of walled tenements and luxurious penthouses, in the wings of the winding alleys and neon-flushed store fronts, I sit, and watch the comedy and drama enacted by the unsung stars of the passing chorus! I listen to the measured meter of blank verse, spouted by the great actors and minor characters... I have reserved 'two on the aisle' tonight, so come be my guest as the curtain rises on a new drama..."

Few comic stars have a legacy that is as odd and downright strange as the obscure and esoteric Witness. For years only a handful of fanatic Timely collectors searched the wilds of fandom for Witness stories... and only a few of those were able to locate and chronicle his hit-or-miss appearances. And it's no wonder, tracking down the random assemblage of issues that contain Witness stories is difficult and expensive (to say the least). And if you're a collector that demands VF or better... FORGET IT! Some of the "Witness books" barely exist at all, much less in high grade!

But even with the frustration, difficulty, and expense associated with this rare Timely character, the writing, art, and over all mystique of the Witness makes for one of the most fascinating and weird characters in the annals of comic history.

You'll tremble! You'll stare in amazement! You'll refuse to believe your startled eyes! But you won't be able to stop reading when...


WITNESS
THIS IS YOUR HOST, THE WITNESS! TODAY I BRING YOU THE STORY OF THE GREAT VARGAS DIAMOND, THAT FABULOUS STONE OF IMMENSE VALUE, AND OF WHAT BEFELL THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES WERE INTRICATELY WOVEN INTO THE DESTINY OF THE GREAT GEM! COME WITH ME TO THE FAMOUS DIAMOND MARTS OF THE WORLD---FOLLOW THE CAREERS OF THE TWO LOWLY PEONS WHO FOUND THE PRECIOUS STONE! DID IT BRING HAPPINESS OR DESPAIR TO THOSE WHOSE LIVES IT AFFECTED? YOU BE THE JUDGE, I AM BUT THE WITNESS—HE WHO TELLS YOU THE TALE OF THE—
"DIAMOND of DESTINY!"

DIAMOND OF DESTINY! Witness story splash panel from *Ideal* #4 (Jan 1949).

ALL COVERS, LOGOS, & CHARACTERS ©MEG 1995.

Mystic #7

For years the collector rumor mill perpetrated the fantasy that *The Witness* #1 was the LAST appearance of the late 1940s star. In fact, just the opposite is true! *Witness* #1 is really the first appearance! Well... almost. The story of the Witness actually begins before issue #1, way back in Late 1941, mere weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Golden Age beauty *Mystic Comics* #7 (dated December, 1941 and sporting an incredible Hitler cover) actually contains the first appearance of **the original** Timely Witness ("Judge, Juror, and Avenger Of Evil"), a costumed "semi-super" character cut from the same mold as the other stars of *Mystic* #7... The Destroyer, The Black Widow, The Challenger, The Terror, Davey and the Demon, The Black Marvel, and The Blazing Skull! The Destroyer, The Black Widow, Davey and the Demon, The Terror, and Blazing Skull stories are beyond belief and truly remarkable contributions to comic history. The Challenger "epic" is certainly not, and the original Witness story is, at best, a major "yawner". It's easy to see why he was relegated to the league of has-been-heroes after only a single story.

The Witness #1

Nearly seven years later, Stan Lee came up with a radically new concept for a character (for comics anyway), and with typical Timely efficiency recycled the name of the original 1941 character. In contrast to the original, this new version was wonderfully innovative, beautifully drawn, and mirrored many of the "men of mystery"; on air detectives populating the radio airwaves of the late 1940s. It also was the archetype for a comic sub-genre, with such famous members as Charlton's Mysterious Traveler and DC's Phantom Stranger, to name a few.

But two things made the "new" Witness unique. The first was the fact that there were seemingly no limits to where story lines could go, including the realms "the beyond", "the nether world", "Hades", and even "downtown New York." This no-holds-barred approach to plot development and context makes for some amazing stories that don't easily "tip off" the reader as to the endings.

The second element was the tie-in to radio. The Witness was a radio star! His "popular" program listened to by adoring fans, jealous, competitors, and angry enemies... but they ALL listened! The meshing of radio melodrama, mystery, the supernatural, and horror in the plot matrix is a testament to the genius of Stan Lee and provided unlimited possibilities for the comic medium.

Regrettably, even genius can go unappreciated, as evidenced by the fact that *The Witness* had but a single issue. The already written and drawn contents of issue #2 now had no home... or did it?

By late 1948 and early 1949 the "handwriting was on the wall" so to speak for Timely. Long running titles were coming to an end and the popularity of Timely super heroes was waning. If you know a company is on its last legs (or in the case of Timely, transitioning to Atlas) how do you finish out the last few issues? Stan Lee knew how... and he was famous for never wasting a story. He simply took the four unpublished Witness stories scheduled for issue #2 and distributed them as fillers in four other comics! But the comics he chose are all rare and obscure issues that most collectors have only "rediscovered" in the last few years.

Ideal #4

Ideal #4 has no real claim to fame other than the fact that issue #3 (with its familiar Joan Of Arc cover) was pictured in a few price guides and several fan press articles. The

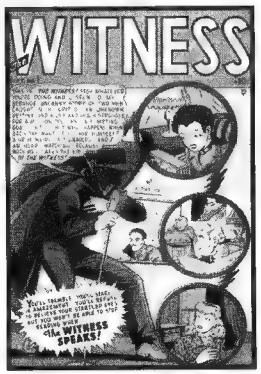
title, in general has never really captured much collector attention. But when you investigate the interior of issue #4, it's a different story.

Once you read past the excruciatingly long (34 pages!) non-epic "Richard The Lion Hearted" that begins *Ideal* #4, there's a couple of great surprises hiding in the "back-of-the-book". Besides a historically interesting letter to young readers (warning them to stand up for "the privilege of reading comics") and a rare one page house ad (for seven Western titles), there is a great seven-page Witness saga entitled "Diamond of Destiny". The story centers around the great "Vargas Diamond", unscrupulous attempts to obtain it, and two Mexican peons portrayed in typical unflattering stereotypes common in the '40s. Even with its few "flaws", "Diamond of Destiny" is an excellent period piece and (like nearly every Witness story) hard to find.

Captain America #71

Everyone by now is aware that *Cap* #74 and 75 (*Weird Tales*) are tough to find and in high demand. But if you talk to a collector who specializes in Captain America they'll tell you that any issue above #67 is difficult... and once you get past #70, darn near impossible.

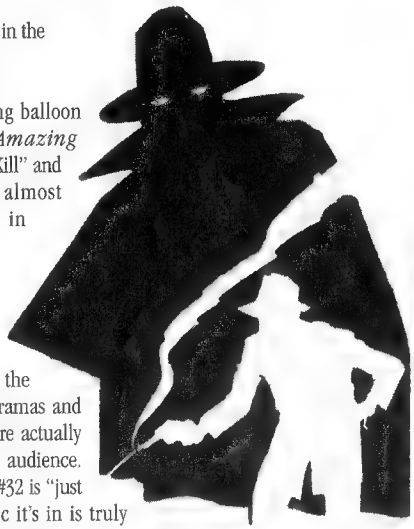
Such is the case with *Cap* #71; and that is likely why the Witness story it contains went "undiscovered" for so many years. Besides the seven-page Witness tale "Fate Fixed A Fight", *Cap* #71 contains some other treasures of comic book history. For instance in the first Cap story, Bucky (Barnes) recovers and is finally reunited with Cap after a six month absence. There is also a one-page editorial about "the assault on the comics industry" that mentions Dr. Fredric Wertham by name! Perhaps the most amazing thing in *Cap* #71 was a one page "Erector Set" featuring Superman and offering to give away a copy of Superman at The Gilbert Hall Of Science. Seeing the Man Of Steel peering out at you from the pages of a Timely comic is truly incredible!



Amazing Mysteries #32

Once again an obscure yet history-making issue hides a "lost" Witness drama... this time the last "full length" story. As originally described in the article "Journey Into The Unknown World Of Atlas Fantasy" published in *Overstreet's Price Guide* #22 (1992) *Amazing Mysteries* is really the company's first horror comic and was the beginning of the "Atlas Dynasty" that soon followed. Since that article was published, collector demand for this already scarce issue has moved *Amazing Mysteries* #32 (and #33) into the realm of extremely hard to find issues and they now occupy a top slot on many Atlas, Marvel, Timely, and pre-Code horror want lists. *Amazing Mysteries* #32 is also famous for another Marvel comics "quirk". Turns out the cover art relates to the two page text story "The Isle Of No Return", rather than one of the longer panel art stories. There are very few examples of this in the entire history of comics!

Also of note is the "high tone" verbiage in the writing. The opening quote for this article is the opening balloon for the Witness story in *Amazing Mysteries* #32, "With Intent To Kill" and is a good example of the almost "Shakespearean" language in Witness dialogue.

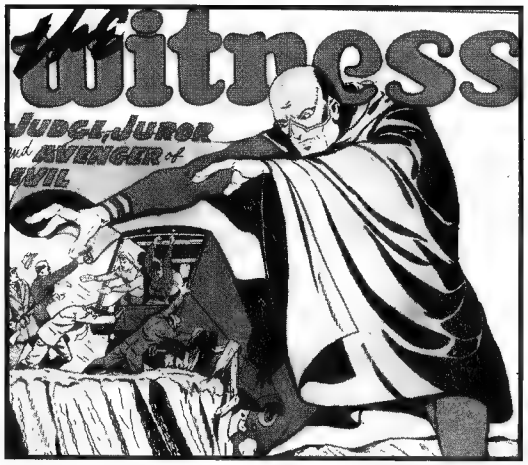


Looking back, it's hard to believe that some of these stories were aimed at an audience of children and it has been postulated that perhaps the adults that listened to radio dramas and radio detectives were actually the primary target audience. The nine-pager in #32 is "just OK" but the comic it's in is truly historic and well worth the effort and expense required to locate it.

Marvel Mystery #92

And speaking of truly historic books, it just so happens that the last appearance of The Witness is a three page "filler" in the comic many have described as the "end of the Timely Golden Age"... and is nestled between the now famous re-told origin of the Human Torch and an equally obscure Captain America story! Both authors hypothesize that the shortest Witness entry actually began as a longer story (possibly four or five pages) but was condensed ("cut-and-pasted") to a three-pager. There is some evidence for this as certain panels seem episodic... as if some intermediary

WITNESS #1 (Sep 1948) One of the most esoteric and obscure Timely/Marvel Comics.



THE ORIGINAL WITNESS as he appeared in *Mystic* #7.

SPLASH PANEL from "I spoke to a dead man!" in *Witness* #1 (Sep 1948).

panels are missing. It is also quite possible the story was published exactly as planned... as a "filler" originally scheduled for the unpublished *Witness* #2.

Whatever the original intent, it is ironic and somehow fitting that the last issue of Timely's flagship title would also contain the last (albeit short) Witness story. Whether by design or coincidence, the bowing out of Stan Lee's "Golden Age" in *Marvel Mystery* #92 was also the swan song of one of comic history's most interesting and obscure "radio stars" and horror hosts. Residing in some of the rarest and esoteric comics in history, the mysterious, erudite, and most of all, eloquent Witness was clearly ahead of his time.

Perhaps some day Stan Lee and the powers at Marvel will rediscover the unpublished cover of *Witness* #2, and to the delight of all, reprint the comic as it was originally intended! We're keeping our collective fingers crossed! ■

The authors would like to thank Dan Bennett (Galveston, Texas), John Snyder and Joe McGucken (Diamond International Galleries, Timonium Maryland), Shawn Hamilton (The Great Escape, Louisville Kentucky), and John Ward (Louisville, Kentucky) for their invaluable information and the loan of research materials. We would also like to give a special thank you to the great Stan Lee for sharing his insights and knowledge.

CBM CHECKLIST

The Witness

MYSTIC COMICS #7
(Dec 1941)
The Witness... Judge, Juror, & Avenger Of Evil (6 Pgs.)
Original version "costumed hero"

THE WITNESS #1
(Sep, 1948, only issue)
"I Spoke To A Dead Man" (8 Pgs.)
"The Million Dollar Man-Trap!" (10 Pgs.)
"Cross-Roads" (9 Pgs.)

IDEAL #4
(Jan, 1949, last issue)
"Diamond Of Destiny" (7 Pgs.)

CAPTAIN AMERICA #71
(Mar, 1949, late issue)
"Fate Fixed A Fight" (7 Pgs.)

AMAZING MYSTERIES #32
(May, 1949, first issue)
"With Intent To Kill" (9 Pgs.)

MARVEL MYSTERY #92
(June, 1949, last issue)
"The Choice" (3 Pgs.)

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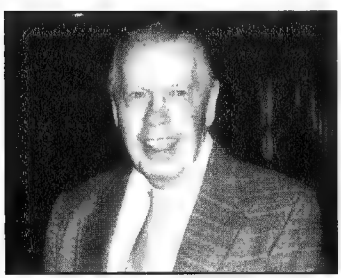
Vincent Zurzolo, Jr. - Owner

Editor of Gold
Vincent Sullivan
A Round Robin Interview

By Pat S. Calhoun

In early 1938 a young editor, (attempting to start an original material anthology comic at a time when reprint comics were the order of the day and original books were on the verge of their breakthrough), made the best business decision of his life. The editor was Vincent Sullivan, and the decision was to use the oft-rejected Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster Superman strip as the cover and lead feature in the new *Action Comics*. The stupendous concept of a superman was matched by the instantaneous and tremendous success of this new approach to adventure characters. *Action* #1 (June, 1938) marked the beginning of comics' Golden Age and established DC as the key publisher of the era.

Vin Sullivan was an early contributor to National's first title, *New Fun Comics* (#1; February, 1935– first original material comic), which became *More Fun Comics* with issue #7 in January, 1936. He soon became an editor, as the National line-up went on to include *New Comics* (#1 December, 1935 with Vin's first cover) and Detective Comics- one of the first single-theme comics- started in March, 1937. Although sometimes inaccurately credited to Creig Flessel, Sullivan was the artist responsible for the leering Oriental face on the cover of that first issue of *Detective*, and probably designed the logo too, in that large slant lettering the three titles shared.



Soon after this Vin induced a friend to try his hand at comics scripts; that friend was Gardner Fox, who went on to create Flash, Hawkman, and the Justice Society.

Whitney Ellsworth was the other half of the editorial team- like Vin, he was also a cartoonist, and contributed many covers and much art to the three anthologies. But Ellsworth left DC sometime in 1937, only to come back in 1940 and to stay for years thereafter.

Just as Vin is a key "godfather" to the Man of Steel, he also was the one who asked Bob Kane to create a costumed hero, resulting in Batman. The caped crusader started in *Detective* #27 (May, 1939)- another instant superstar that gave DC a one-two punch that would keep them at the top of the superhero heap for a good long time.

Siegel and Shuster had tried selling Superman to the newspaper syndicates without success, and even comic book pioneer Will Eisner passed on the chance to publish the strip. But the young men from Cleveland were selling to National- Dr. Occult, a Supe-prototype appeared in early issues of *More Fun*. And Slam Bradley's 13-page epic in *Detective* #1 was one of the first sustained complete-in-one-issue adventures- a seminal story of great import. So Sullivan may have already had a respect for Siegel and Shuster, and editorial assistant, young Sheldon "Scribbly" Mayer, got very excited when he saw the Superman samples. Mayer told Vin that this was just what the comics needed, and, as Sullivan was well-aware, the knock-off newspaper strip clones that peopled DC's three anthologies weren't enough to set the original material comics market on fire. And there he was, fruitlessly searching for a star to champion *Action Comics*... Vincent Sullivan made the right decision, and *Action* #1 paved the way for hundreds of gaudy four-color heroes within the next few years- from scores of publishers.

The extra-thick 1939 *New York World's Fair Comic*- featuring Superman and the Sandman and others- was a

Vin's Fu Manchu on the cove of Detective #1 helps to laun DC's third title and its first "single theme" anthology.

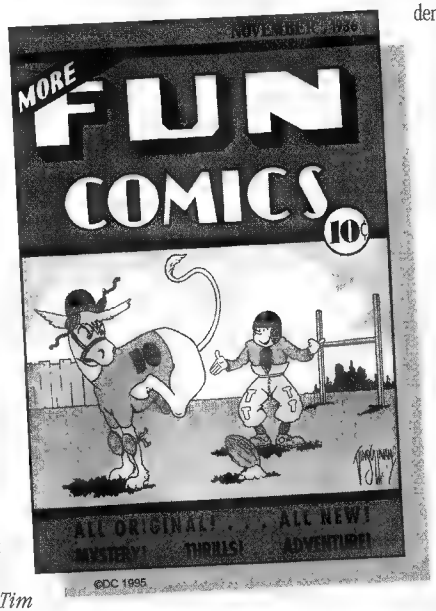
sure-fire idea of Vin's that (after it transformed into *World's Finest Comics* with Batman added to the line-up) enjoyed a long and happy readership all through the Golden Age and into the Silver Age–when the magazine dropped to 36 pages and the only way to feature Superman and Batman was to team them up.

Sullivan parted from DC in 1940 and took on the editorial reins for Columbia Comics, whose chief anthology title was *Big Shot Comics,* featuring Skyman, the Face, and Sparky Watts- the strong-man centerpiece of a wacky humor strip. In 1944 Sullivan went on to form his own comic book company, Magazine Enterprises (ME).

Magazine Enterprises began putting out books in their A-1 series, published the first romance comic, *Romantic Picture Novelettes*, in 1946… and also started an early crime comic with *Manhunt* #1 (October, 1947). *Manhunt* offered Space Ace-drawn by Fred Guardineer, Undercover Girl- with Ogden Whitney art, and the Red Fox- illustrated by L. B. Cole. Gardner Fox did much of the writing, so

Manhunt had smooth storytelling as well as excellent art.

Sullivan's company bought another Siegel and Shuster hero, Funnyman, in 1947. Written on their heels of their bitter split from DC, this super-parody was nonetheless light-hearted. The stories and situations were amusing if not hilarious, and the art was engaging if not awesome- from today's perspective *Funnyman* contains fairly charming entertainment laced with high nostalgia value. But the fact remains that Funnyman faded out after six issues.



MORE FUN COMICS #15 (Nov 1936) Clean cartooning by Vin as the first original material comic book title comes toward the end of its second year.

It was a comic based on Western movie star Tim Holt that became ME's first real success. *Tim Holt* #1 (*A-1* #14) came out in late 1948. Issue #6 featured the debut of the Calico Kid who by issue #11 metamorphosed into the Ghost Rider- ME's top character. Drawn by Dick Ayers, this strip combined the Western, superhero, and horror genres in an inspired mix. Fan favorite Frank Frazetta contributed a few memorable covers for the Ghost Rider (who soon had his own mag), but it was always Ayers who drew the stories- and some of his covers were first-rate too. Another Western hit for ME was a radio tie-in: Straight Arrow!

VIN WITH CREIG FLESSEL and cover proof for the first romance comic book.

ME also published the only comic book with Frazetta art all the way through- *Thun'da...King of the Congo*- in 1952. This jungle hero lasted six issues, although Bob Powell took over the art chores starting with #2. Magazine Enterprises, like many publishers after the Comics Code's establishment in late-1954, found that the brave new world consisted mainly of diminishing returns. Their output trickled down to a few humor titles, and ME stopped publishing comics in 1958.

Vincent Sullivan's career path after the demise of ME is a great example of how dead the industry was: he got into the food business with Popeye Peanut Butter. Unfortunately, (and those last few years losing money with ME didn't help), Vin lacked the big capital needed to promote a sufficient ad campaign to gain product recognition.

Round 1: Vincent Sullivan

Author's Note: David Siegel (working with his friend Charley Roberts), has been instrumental in making contact with Golden Age editors, writers, and artists. David deserves the credit for the concept of having some of the great artists who worked for Vin Sullivan contribute anecdotes and mini-interviews to this article. I conducted these by phone recently, and, as you'll see, each of these gentlemen is well-deserving of many articles on their work alone- so even though we often left the topic of Vin per se- any digressions were equally as interesting... Of course I started with Vin himself...

PAT: *To start off, how did the Sandman come about back in 1939?*

VIN: Sandman was created by Bert Christman- also he was the first artist and writer on the strip. I know I wrote a lot of the one-page text stories in those early issues- they were a post-office requirement...

PAT: *Then you went to Columbia after DC?*

VIN: Yes, right from the start, with *Big Shot* #1 which was cover dated May 1940. Some DC artists went with me, like Fred Guardineer and Ogden Whitney. These were fellows I had helped get started, and when I told them I'd have good work for them they came along.

PAT: *I know after that you started ME, Magazine Enterprises. It's one of my favorite companies of the era.*

VIN: Yes, it was my company. I ran ME from 1944 through 1958... the whole time the company was working. And, like many comic companies, by the late 1950s ME's sales were way down. Television came along and killed us.

PAT: *I noticed that* Ghost Rider *stopped just as the Code was adopted. Was there any connection?*

VIN: None of the old titles were selling, so it may have just given way to something else. My involvement with comics ended after 1958. I went from comics to peanut butter. We licensed Popeye, who was popular on TV, but didn't have the funds to finance enough advertising to make the public aware of us.

PAT: *Who did you work with at ME?*

VIN: Raymond Krank was the editor for the whole length of the company. Ogden Whitney did Undercover Girl for the *Manhunt* title. We wanted a female detective, and she fit the bill.

There was Gardner Fox... He and I were boyhood friends... we went to the same elementary school. When I became an editor at DC I asked him to write some scripts. He had passed his bar exams, but hadn't started practicing law... and I knew he had a yen for storytelling. It worked out pretty well; Fox wrote a great many stories.

PAT: *Do you ever look at recent comics?*

VIN: I've seen a few. They don't make me very happy.

PAT: *Upbeat they aren't, by and large. It sure has been fun talking about the Golden Age. And I know I'm going to enjoy talking to the other folks in this round robin- some great comic creators...*

VIN: Yes, they are all fine artists. Thanks, Pat.

PAT: *Thank you Mr. Sullivan.*

Round 2: Creig Flessel

As all fans of early DC know, the Golden Age of comic book covers began long before Action *#1. Creig Flessel's covers for* Detective *#2 (April, 1937) through #15 (May, 1938- the month before* Action *#1), and in particular the sheer creepiness of #11-#13 and the superb "cops in the mirror" staging of #15, constitute the first "high-impact" cover run. Creig's Sandman cover for* Adventure *#42 (September, 1939) is one of the best early superhero covers. Flessel also did his share of interior work, creating some characters that ran for quite a few issues. Also, Creig decided early on to become a keen observer of the burgeoning comic book industry- as you shall hear...*

PAT: *I guess Vin was just starting as an editor when you came to DC.*

CREIG: Yes. Of course the dominant figure back then was Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, the publisher. An ex-cavalry officer and a pulp writer- he was the first to publish original material comics. He was usually conspicuous by his absence- dodging bill collectors and process servers, putting out these books without any money. I had been doing interior illustrations for Street and Smith's *Shadow* and *Doc Savage* pulps, and transitioned to comics easily. I went in and sat down and started to work.

Vin was there, and Whitney Ellsworth, and the Major was in and out- by the freight elevator. Of course there weren't any comics to use as guides- but I took off from N.C. Wyeth and Howard Pyle, the old book and magazine illustrators.

PAT: *Do you remember the Major's attitude towards Vin?*

CREIG: They always got along real well. Then the Major had to sell out to Harry Donenfeld, who was both a publisher and distributor. A while after that Vin went over to start Columbia and *Big Shot Comics*.

I wasn't in comics that long, but I knew most of the early crowd, including Bill Ely, Siegel and Shuster, Sven Elven, and the like.

ADVENTURE COMICS #42 (Sep 1939) Flessel's Sandman cover is a memorable translation of the "pulp mood" to the comic book.

PAT: *Sven Elven has to be a pen name- it's too perfect.*

CREIG: I know, seven-eleven. He was a character; he

continued on page 46

UNSEEN GOLD

The mystery of the lost...
CONTACT#2

When I took a running tally on comic covers absent from the *Gerber Photo-Journal*, I perused the pages with empty cover frames... covers Gerber was unable to locate. I soon realized that blank frames were not the only means through which I could locate lost covers...

BY MATT NELSON

Unbeknownst to me, the most ELUSIVE of the elusive covers were not just absent... they were disguised as other covers! Thus is the case with *Contact* #2. My friend Shay Sheth eloquently elaborates: "Just when you thought you nailed down all the L. B. Cole covers after *Comic Book Marketplace* disclosed the beautiful *Captain Aero* #26, there's one more... *Contact* #2.

But, you say, it's in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*? Wrong! Apparently Gerber put in two #8's by mistake, so the real #2 hasn't shown its face until now!

The "lost" *Contact* #2 has cover graphics that depict American paratroopers gunning down Japanese pilots in mid-descent... set against a deep blue background and framed at the bottom by snow-capped mountains (which conceal the L. B. Cole signature). What a beauty!

If you decide to search one out, you just may get lucky. I've heard of copies that were discovered in shops and at conventions... and purchased for under $50! This virtually unknown L. B. Cole gem is still deep in the 'Bargain Basement' and well worth the effort required to find."

To make matters worse, the first eight covers of *Contact* are void of an issue number. I remember noticing the *Contact* #2 mistake and dismissing it as a reprinted cover later in the run. Lest the foolish shall learn the folly of their ways...and thus, another book is added to my want list, the L. B. Cole legacy, and the gallery of Gerber's Unseen Gold! ■

COLOR GALLERY

Ernie Gerber put in two *Contact Comics* #8 by mistake so the real #2 (right) hasn't shown its face until now!

Courtesy the Shay Sheth collection.

©Aviation Press

ALL SELECT #2
(Winter 1943) This scarce issue boasts an appearance by that arch-villain, the Red Skull. Although shown on covers together since 1941– Cap, Torch, and Subby didn't appear together in a story until 1946 (right).

ALL SELECT #1
(Fall 1943) Captain America, Human Torch, and Sub-Mariner were busy heroes at this time. Each had their own mag, and all three starred in *All Winner*, and Torch and Subby headlined in *Marvel Mystery*, and more! Here, the threesome are shown storming a Nazi Stronghold. (left)

All Select ©MEG 1995

CHAMPION #10
(Aug 1940) The Human Meteor races towards the sizzling fuse as the woman tied to a chair stares in terror. This is the second cover in the career of the legendary Jack Kirby. (above)

CHAMP #22
(Sept 1942) There were almost as many less-than-human hooded creeps in the Golden Age as there were superheroes! This is the last Human Meteor cover, and *Champ Comics* ended with issue #25. (upper left)

CHAMPION #8
(Jun 1940) This slam-bang action cover is what the Golden Age was all about. Artist Joe Simon is still waiting to get paid for it... (left)

Champ & Champion
©Harvey Publications

AMAZING MYSTERIES #32
(May,1949, first issue)
"With Intent To Kill" (9 pages, right) .

MARVEL MYSTERY #92
(June,1949, last issue)
"The Choice" (3 pages, lower right).

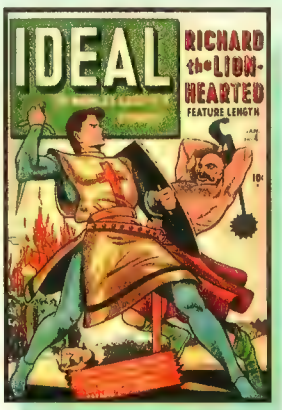
CAPTAIN AMERICAN #71
(March,1949, last issue)
"Fate Fixed A Fight" (7 pages, below).

All Covers, Logos, & Characters ©MEG 1995

The WITNESS
SEPT. NO. 1
10¢
THIS IS...THE WITNESS! STOP WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING AND LISTEN TO MY STRANGE, UNCANNY STORY OF TWO MEN CAUGHT IN THE GRIP OF AN UNKNOWN DESTINY-AND A LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE FOR A MILLION DOLLARS! A TEMPTING GOAL, ISN'T IT? BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EACH ONE WANTS IT ALL FOR HIMSELF? A GRIM, WEIRD TALE UNFOLDS...AND I AM NEAR...WATCHING! BECAUSE NOTHING ESCAPES THE EYES OF THE WITNESS!
YOU'LL TREMBLE! YOU'LL STARE IN AMAZEMENT! YOU'LL REFUSE TO BELIEVE YOUR STARTLED EYES! BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP READING WHEN... The WITNESS SPEAKS!

THE WITNESS #1
(September,1948, only issue)
"I Spoke To A Dead Man"
(8 pages)
"The Million Dollar Man-Trap!"
(10 pages)
"Cross-Roads" (9 pages. left).

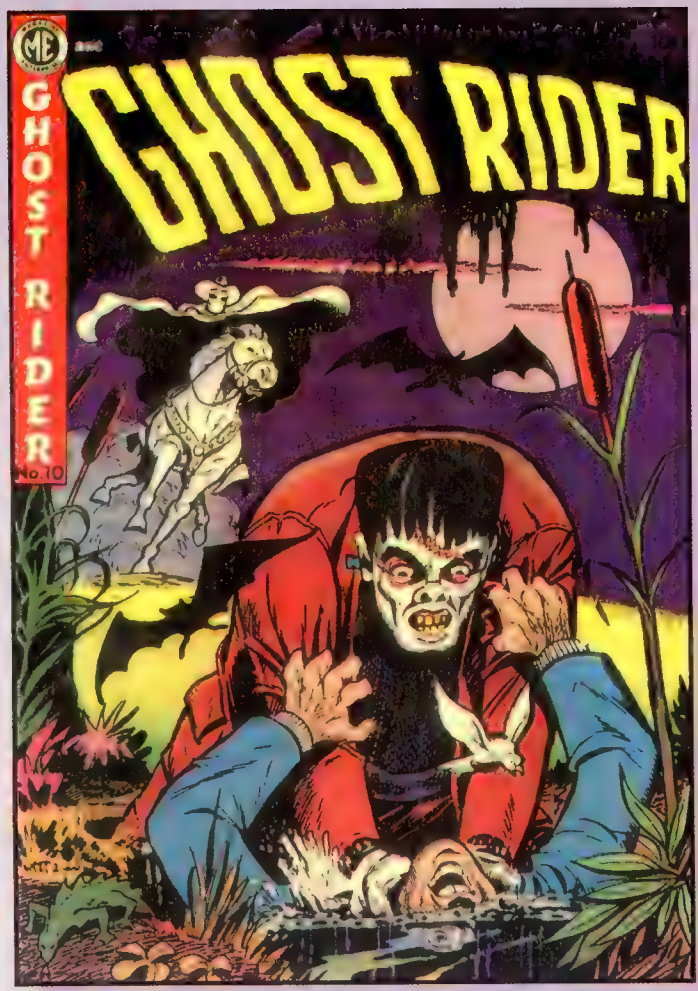
MYSTIC COMICS #7
(December,1941)
The Witness... Judge, Juror, &
Avenger Of Evil (6 pages, below)
Orginial version "costumed hero".



IDEAL #4
(January,1949,
last issue)
"Diamond Of
Destiny"
(7 pages, right).

GHOST RIDER #10
(Dec 1952) This wonderful Dick Ayers cover combines a lot of nature with the overwhelming horror. As weird as things got in Ghost Rider stories, there was usually a "rational explanation" at the end.

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED #4
(Apr 1952) You can almost feel the dank graveyard, the clammy fog, and the touch of fleshless fingers on this highly effective Sheldon Moldoff cover.



© ME

© FAWCETT

© DC 1995

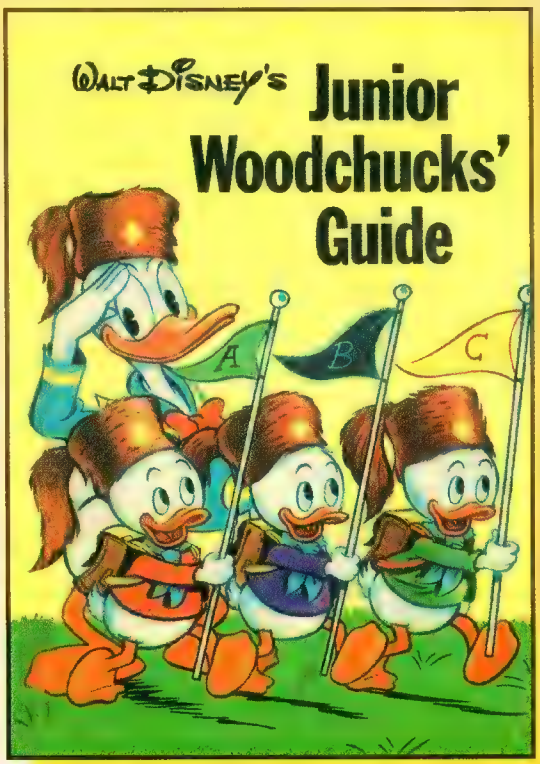
DETECTIVE #1
(Mar 1937) Vincent Sullivan's first non-humor cover is also the first Oriental villain cover in comics. There is a beautiful simplicity to the cover, and it was followed in the next 15 issues by an awesome run of Creig Flessel crime covers– a great start for a great title.

A VALUABLE "EDITION" TO WOODCHUCK LORE
It contains the first mention of the Junior Woodchucks' Guide – *Uncle Scrooge* #5 (Mar-May 1954, left).

HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE MAKE THEIR BIG SPLASH
debut as Junior Woodchucks in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #125 (Feb 1951, lower left).

BE PREPARED TO SCOUT
high and low for the *Junior Woodchucks' Guide.* (Danbury Press, 1973; below)

©Disney 1995



COLOR GALLERY

A WEIRD DISCOVERY! *Weird Comics* #12 (Canadian Edition) Duo-Tone cover. VERY RARE. Fox reprints are rare in general–neither Overstreet nor Canuck Comics mentions them among the known Canadian reprint editions. The cover is the same as the U.S. edition of #12, albeit duo-tone.

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1B	**Silver Comic** Fits 1950 to 1969	7-3/4" x 11-1/4"	13.95	21.95	38.95	179.00	329.00	325.00 per 1000
1C	**Gold Comic** Fits 1935 to 1949	8-1/4" x 11-1/4"	15.95	24.95	41.95	189.00	359.00	349.00 per 1000
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6B	**Silver Comic** Fits 1950 to 1969	7-1/4" x 10-1/2" + 1-1/4" Flap	18.95	78.95	138.00	125.00 per 1000	111.00 per 1000
6C	**Gold Comic** Fits 1935 to 1949	7-3/4" x 10-1/2" + 1-1/4" Flap	19.95	81.95	140.00	128.00 per 1000	114.00 per 1000
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Continued from page 47

looked like Ichabod Crane. We all had the same problem: trying to make a living. I went into the newspaper strip Dixie Dugan, and also did comic advertising.

But watching the comic business get going was really something. Vin was always very dapper- an Irishman through and through. He was a good balance for Whitney Ellsworth- Whit would go out and carouse at night, but he was a good editor.

Vin was a great guy to work for. I only had one cover rejected- the skull figure with the bloody knife. And I think that decision was made by the guys uptown. Donenfeld had already gotten in trouble with his "Spicy" pulps.

PAT: *It is a pretty spooky cover- reminds me of Edward Munch's "The Scream".*

SPACE ACE
LIKE THE MODERN PATROLMAN ON HIS BEAT, THE SPACE PATROLMEN OF THE FUTURE HAVE THEIR FLYING ORBITS IN WHICH THEY CIRCLE CONSTANTLY, EVER ON THE ALERT FOR DANGER THAT MIGHT COME OUT OF THE NEIGHBOR UNIVERSES... AND ON A ROUTINE SPACE FLIGHT, JET BLACK AND HIS YOUNG CO-PATROLMAN, JAK TAL, MAKE CONTACT WITH —
"THE MEN FROM DEEP SPACE"
SPACE PATROL
©ME

SPACE ACE LOGO by Fred Guardineer.

CREIG: I didn't think it was all that frightening.

PAT: *Did you pay much attention to comics after the late 1940s?*

CREIG: No. I really wanted to be an illustrator, but I didn't realize that by the middle 1930s illustration was dead. Photographs had taken over, and the magazines: *Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, McCalls*- all had great illustrators, but they lost their jobs to technology.

One thing you can quote me on: this business is about survival. And that goes for you too- talking on the phone, with computers and the Internet. Look at the way TV brought comic advertising to a halt.

PAT: *Vin switched to selling peanut butter.*

CREIG: I'm sending some of my old art to the Ohio State Library, and I saw a strip I did for the New York subway, "Our Town Oddities". It ran on big cards in the subway cars.

We were innocent pioneers. You never know what you can do. They'd say "we need a character", and I'd sit down and write and draw Steve Conrad or Speed Saunders- those both continued after I left them. Thinking of those old Sandman covers makes me think about this "new" Sandman they've got. But whatever happened to writing stories about good and bad? Whatever happened to drawing pretty girls?

PAT: *When you were drawing comics it was the new thing... the medium of the moment. But now with TV, MTV, video games, and such... maybe comics are a few rungs down the ladder. You were in the right place at the right time.*

CREIG: That's true... literally. Proximity to New York meant I could go into town and show my samples.

PAT: *Talking to you guys helps make this the "Golden Age of comic book historians"- so maybe I'm in the right place at the right time too.*

CREIG: Good luck, Pat.

Round 3: Fred Guardineer

Fred Guardineer's unique style is one of the key landmarks of the Golden Age. Guardineer's world is one of two-dimensional beauty, making up for a lack of depth with a richness of design. And the lack of dynamic movement is more than compensated for by the geometric perfection of his landscapes. It's no surprise that one of Fred's specialties was magician strips (Zatara, Mr. Mystic, Marvelo, Merlin), because his art is almost psychedelic in nature: you really get the feeling of a whole new reality. And Guardineer's career follows Vin- from DC, to Columbia, to ME. The patterned coolness of Guardineer's style also served him well on his crime covers (especially on Detective *#24, #26, and #30), where the abstract approach actually heightens the raw tension between the antagonists involved.*

FRED: I started at Chesler, the second publisher of original material, in November, 1936. I had done some pulp chapter headings for Street & Smith and Popular, and I had reproductions that I took around. I had never seen a comic book before, but when I saw some at Chesler's, it was obvious that a comic page was something much like eight of these chapter headings done on one page.

I did some sports stuff- my favorites, though, were wild West and detective. Sports illustrations were hard to do, and when you went around and started at new places- the low man on the totem pole- they'd always give you sports because no one else wanted to do it.

Chesler had a sweat shop studio with maybe a dozen desks with guys drawing at them, turning out comic pages as fast as they could. I just sat down and started doing it. It was right up my alley. I remember calling home and

saying- "I've got a job drawing cowboys and Indians where I can do what I like."

PAT: *That always helps, because the pay wasn't so much.*

FRED: Well, I got some raises pretty fast- I went from $20 to a big $25 a week. Then I worked it up to $30 and $35- not a bad wage in those days.

I always got along with Chesler- a lot of people didn't. I just did my work, and he paid my wages. I did get to know Major Nicholson, who was Chesler's rival, and in 1938 I went over to National and started working for Vin. The Zatara story in *Action* #1 was some of my first work there. They also had *Adventure Comics, Fun Comics*, and *Detective*. I met Whitney Ellsworth, and Creig Flessel was there too.

Then Donenfeld came into the picture. He'd gotten in trouble with "girlie" mags (the notorious Spicy pulps), and comics were sort of like taking a cure.

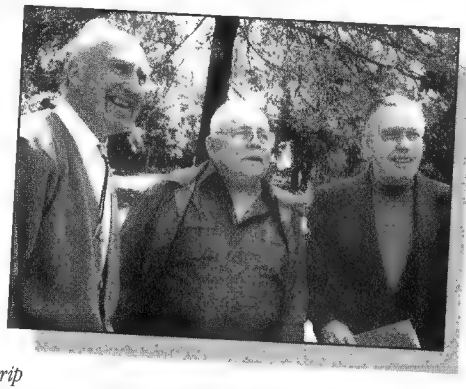
I shifted from salary to free-lance at DC. I had a place to work there, alongside Vin, and I could also take my work home. And when Vin left I went with him to Columbia. Here's something- I have a note from February 1938 that I never got my $40 from the Major for "Boomerang Jones" in *Adventure Comics*.

At Columbia I did Marvelo the Magician for Vin. Then I started working for Arnold and Eisner at Quality.

The Blue Tracer was this ship-submarine-tank-plane vehicle that could do everything except bore through the earth. That was a fun strip. I believe it ran in *Military Comics* with Blackhawk.

Tracer was fun. That was 1941 and 1942. Then I did Mr. Mystic in those newspaper booklets with Eisner's Spirit...

Then I became a soldier. I'd see Vin on and off, and when I got out of the Army I did work for Vin again. I also worked for Charles Biro and Bob Wood at Gleason. They had been with me at Chesler's, by the way, and now they were doing well with *Crime Does Not Pay*.



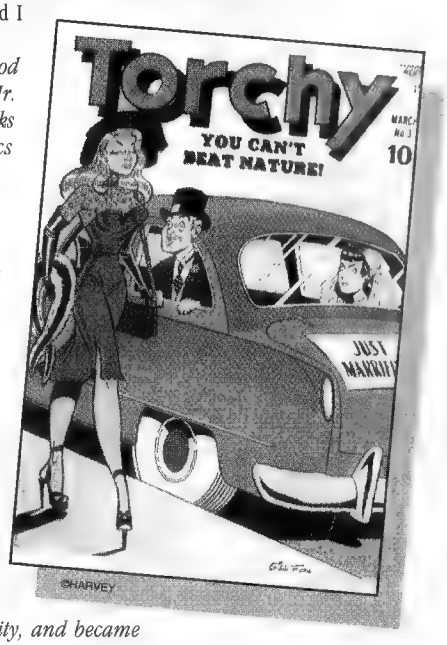
PAT: *Biro was a great writer... maybe the greatest comic book writer ever. I also really like Space Ace- the future policeman strip you did for Magazine Enterprises'* Manhunt. *It was crazy space opera, and the craziest and best thing about it was the art.*

FRED: That was late 1947 and 1948. My last comic work was for Vin too. I did Durango Kid- stories, art, lettering, covers- for about three years in the early 1950s. I did my absolute best on it. I always enjoyed working with Vin- I liked him, and I think he liked me.

PAT: *Those are good books. Thanks, Mr. Guardineer, and thanks for all those comics throughout the years.*

Round 4: Gill Fox

Gill Fox did animation work for the Fleisher Studios before moving into the comic book field. He came to National just after Major Nicholson's departure, and, working for Vin, did one-pagers and fillers for the various titles. He then moved over to Quality, and became editor when Ed Cronin left for Hillman. He drew many of the Quality covers, including Doll Man, Plastic Man, *and the* Black Condor *covers for Feature Comics. Fox also did notable work on the Torchy strip- that delightful antidote to the superheroic horde. After departing from Quality in 1951 he pursued his career with syndicated strips and later began doing editorial cartoons. He currently draws for a Connecticut newspaper.*



TORCHY #3 (Mar 1950) Torchy struts her stuff in this sly scene by Gill Fox.

FRED GUARDINEER with Vin and Fless.

PAT: *So you came to National and started working for Vin...*

GILL: I did quite a number of movie and believe-it-or-not pages.

PAT: *You're the guy who wrote that "Sylvia Sidney has a six-foot ball of tin-foil in her living room".*

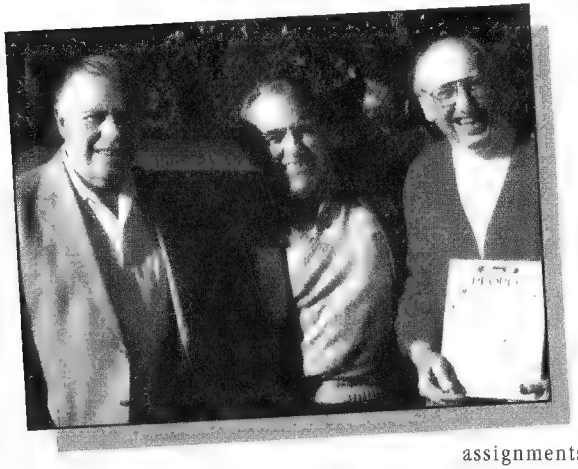
GILL: We made the stuff up. Nobody cared.

PAT: *Nowadays, if you said something like "Madonna keeps an eleven-foot anaconda in her basement", you'd have a lawsuit on your hands.*

GILL: I had one about W.C. Fields based on a true story. He really did break his arm or something, and I had him in bed with a machine he'd rigged up to turn the pages of books for him. Made it up!

PAT: *And your relationship with Vin was...*

GILL: I was freelance, so I didn't hang out there. Vin was my editor who I'd turn in pages to and get assignments from. I was also working for an ad agency.



GILL FOX flanked by Vin and Fless.

PAT: *What were the circumstances surrounding your move from DC to Quality?*

GILL: I went to Quality on a fluke. I was on the Lexington Avenue bus, and I knew where the Quality offices were and that they were starting to buy original material. I got off the bus spontaneously, and went in and spoke to Ed Cronin, the editor. I started as an artist and assistant editor and became part of the Quality organization. After a year in which I learned a lot from Cronin, he went to Hillman, and Busy Arnold picked me to take his place.

PAT: *Cronin did a good job on* Airboy *at Hillman. But you took over right when Quality was starting to move.*

GILL: Let me give credit where credit is due. It was Busy Arnold, the publisher, who assembled the team of talent that made Quality. Will Eisner, Jack Cole, Lou Fine- they were top talent.

PAT: *Were you around for the start of Blackhawk?*

GILL: Yes, Eisner had a hand in it, as he did for Doll Man and Uncle Sam. But Plastic Man was Jack Cole's. I've been all over the world and never seen genius like that. The only one to come close was Dik Browne, who created Hagar the Horrible.

PAT: *What about Midnight? He was definitely cut from the Spirit cloth.*

GILL: Rumor has it that Busy asked Jack Cole to do the strip "in case anything happened to Eisner and the Spirit".

PAT: *And Torchy?*

GILL: Torchy was created by Bill Ward, another real talented artist. But Bill was helping on Blackhawk and other straight strips, so when Busy saw that Torchy was popular and expanded her from a five-page feature into her own title, I ended up drawing a lot of the covers and stories.

PAT: *There's that cover with a bride and groom driving by and his head turning as Torchy slinks down the street...*

GILL: That's mine. Bill takes credit for some of my stuff, and I take credit for some of his- but that one I'm sure on. They laid down the law and banned Torchy in Boston, but that just made her even more popular. Incidentally, the Torchy stuff was written by a very prim, proper, and pretty young lady, who looked so sedate... she was able to sneak all kinds of double meanings into the dialog of the stories.

PAT: *How long did you stay at Quality?*

GILL: Until 1951. The last strip I did was Candy- a teenager thing. I wanted to move up to syndicated stuff. Most of my jobs came from taking over existing strips. Then I got into editorial cartooning. I should have done so a long time ago- there's more security on the editorial page than on the funnies page... often more money too. It's demanding, but satisfying.

PAT: *Talking with you and the other Golden Age greats really brings home the idea that creators often crossed over to other companies. Thanks for your contribution, Mr. Fox.*

GILL: Thank you. I'll look forward to seeing it published.

Round 5: Frank Bolle

Frank Bolle is one of the second generation of comic book artists, who came into the field in the late 1940s. Great as the Golden Age was (and there is some vagueness about where it ends), an argument can be made that the early 1950s were even better. These new artists "stood on the shoulders" of that first group that defined comic books in the late 1930s, and they expanded more fully into genres like Western, crime, and fantasy. Bolle drew Tim Holt, the Hollywood cowboy ME licensed to star in his own comic, for six or seven years, and starting the strip early in his career improved until the work was finely rendered with a smooth and seamless visual narrative.

PAT: *How did you get started with ME and Vin?*

FRANK: I came to ME and Vin Sullivan in the late 1940s. Someone told me to go see ME, and I went and

showed Ray Krank my samples. I was just out of the Army and had done only a little cartoon work. I remember it was a rainy day. I was just checking it out, and hadn't yet asked for any work, but he looked at my stuff and handed me a seven-page script. Some kind of spy story- I went home and drew it.

PAT: *Maybe a feature for Manhunt?*

FRANK: Probably. I brought it back a week later, and got more assignments. Vincent showed up once in a while; he looked like a movie star.

PAT: *Was Tim Holt your first assignment?*

FRANK: Yes. Ray and Vince called me in and said, "We have a project that we want you to do." And they told me about Tim Holt; and then they asked me if I liked Westerns. I said I was crazy about them, and that I was always drawing horses and cowboys and stuff. They even gave me a pass to the Paramount building to see a preview of one of his movies- that was great! I was around 21, young enough to think a free movie was a big deal. Tim Holt also appeared in Best Of The West.

So I got better as I went along. Tim turned into Red Mask, and then there was the Black Phantom- a masked cowgirl. And I got to work with Gardner Fox- a terrific writer. He could turn out good stories one after another. I'd see Vincent there, but didn't get too close to him.

PAT: *Who originally thought of that mock 3-D thing... the "extra dimension effect"?*

FRANK: Yes- that was my idea. It was near the end of ME. I saw the 3-D movies and the comics with the glasses, and I told Ray that we could do it without glasses- just with perspective and such. He said go ahead and do it. Whenever Tim would be jumping or whatever he'd spill out the panel borders. We went for a lot of depth.

PAT: *I remember one cover where the top of the book has page edges drawn on it- great stuff!*

FRANK: It was a nice idea, nothing big, but people sure remembered me for it.

PAT: *I have "no glasses" 3-D books from at least three different companies- ACG and Lev Gleason as well as ME. It's a fun little sub-genre. Where did you go after ME?*

FRANK: I did a lot of work for Gold Key: Dr. Solar, Boris Karloff Tales Of Mystery, Twilight Zone. Then I went into newspaper strips... I did a strip for the McNaught Syndicate. Then I started with Tribune Syndicate on Winnie Winkle. It's one of those strips like Gasoline Alley that's been around since 1916 or so. I'm at least the third artist on it.

PAT: *Did you know any of the other ME artists?*

FRANK: I knew Frank Frazetta a little bit, and Dick Ayers. There was always a Ghost Rider tale in Tim Holt, so Dick Ayers and I were kind of a team.

PAT: *Thanks for your excellent information, Mr. Bolle. Your contribution to this round robin has been great.*

FRANK: You're welcome.

Round 6: Dick Ayers

This is the man who drew Magazine Enterprises' original Ghost Rider. Also during the early 1950s he turned out some great fantasy art over at Atlas. When Atlas revived in 1959, Ayers did the inks on most of the Kirby monster stories and covers, and of course he went on to do a vast amount of work for Marvel. Ayers began his career with Vin- just as ME was getting on track. And what a career it's been- "Yipee kie oh, yipee kie Ayers, Ghost Rider's in the sky!"

PAT: *Was your first work for Vin at ME?*

DICK: Yes. I did a little penciling for Joe Shuster on Funnyman while I was still in art school.

Then I did the Jimmy Durante books. Vin put out the word that he needed somebody for them and Shuster recommended me. Vin did those as full-length stories, which I don't recall other companies doing. He had a lot of ideas.

While waiting for the first Durante script I did a Doc Holliday story in Cowboys and Indians. That and the Durante books (we did three, but only two were published) kept me busy through the summer and into the Fall of

Tim HOLT
I-I CAN'T! I-I'M AFRAID!
MY GUN'S EMPTY! BLACK PHANTOM, WHY ARE YOU WAITING? SHOOT!
THE BLACK PHANTOM — LOVELY OUTLAW QUEEN TURNED DEPUTY SHERIFF — FAILS REDMASK JENKINS GANG! HAS THE OUTLAW QUEEN DECIDED TO HELP HER FORMER RIDERS OF THE LONG TRAILS? OR IS THERE SOME OTHER ANSWER TO THE GRIM TREACHERY OF —
"THE TWIN PHANTOM!"
EXTRA DIMENSION EFFECT ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK BOLLE
THIS!
©ME

TIM HOLT #41 (Apr-May 1954) **Red Mask and the Black Phantom in an "extra dimension effect" splash by Frank Bolle.**

1948. After a few more short projects, I was handed the Calico Kid in Tim Holt assignments.

The Calico Kid was actually Rex Fury, the lawman (a federal marshal who passed himself off as a peddler). He eventually evolved into Ghost Rider. They already had Sing Song, Fury's Chinese friend, in the strip for comic relief. Sing Song was a very clever and handy fellow who was always helping Rex do the job. I enjoyed drawing him.

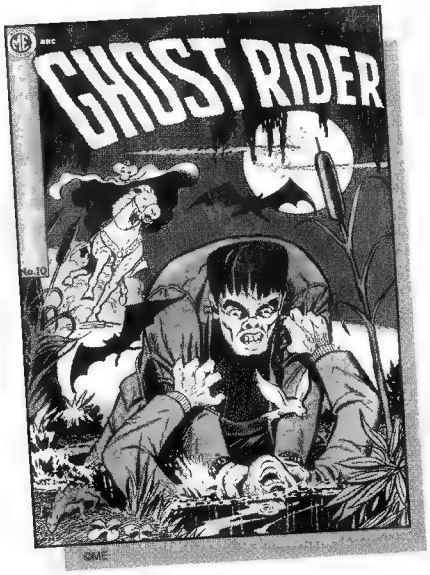
PAT: *Do you know who originally came up with the Calico Kid?*

DICK: No. I came to the strip after it was already going... but the idea of Ghost Rider took off from Vaughn Monroe's popular song "Ghost Riders in the Sky".

Also Disney had just come out with "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and the Headless Horseman". And Vin said- "go see that movie and get some of that atmosphere into the Ghost Rider".

I think Ray Krank, the editor, wrote the changeover story. Bad guys throw Rex Fury into a whirlpool and leave him for dead. Fury escapes and thinks that the "back from the dead" approach will scare those guys silly- and the Ghost Rider was born.

GHOST RIDER #10 (Dec 1952) An outstanding Dick Ayers cover shows Ghost Rider confronting Frankenstein's monster.



PAT: *Ghost Rider is the key early 1950s character, and a combination of Western, superhero, and horror genres. The magazine I work for just did a "what are your five favorite comic covers?" survey, and I entered* Ghost Rider *#10... the one with Frankenstein drowning that guy in the pool with his eye peering up from under water.*

DICK: I just redid that one for a collector magazine cover. It's got a balloon saying "OK, I'll give you my copy of *Ghost Rider* #1!"

PAT: *Did you keep that little lizard in the art?*

DICK: It's all there. I've got the color proof of that cover framed on the wall of my studio; it's one of my favorites too.

PAT: *Did you deal much with Vin directly?*

DICK: Well, Ray Krank was my editor- so I dealt more with him. But I'd be delivering stuff all the time, and if Vin was around, I'd see him there.

EDITOR OF GOLD meets editor of Silver- Vin and Julius Schwartz at the 1993 San Diego Comic Con.

PAT: *I noticed that the Ghost Rider stops just as the Comics Code is adopted. Vin thought it might be coincidence... do you think there's any connection?*

DICK: I think there was some trouble; they wanted us to rename the character.

PAT: *Was the Presto Kid the heir to Ghost Rider?*

DICK: No- but the idea of a cowboy magician who didn't use guns fit right into the post-Code framework.

PAT: *Despite all the people who fell by the wayside in the post-Code depression, you seemed to keep right on going.*

DICK: It was slow for nine months or so, but aside from that I kept pretty steady.

PAT: *You also worked a lot for the Atlas fantasy mags in the early 1950s...*

DICK: I was also working for Charlton then. It kept me pretty busy.

PAT: *Do you have any favorite comic book genres?*

DICK: Well, Western... war... I also liked those short horror stories with the twist endings.

PAT: *Like many collectors, I love those Atlas fantasy books. The early 1950s is my favorite era. After the Code, it just wasn't the same.*

DICK: It (the Comics Code Authority) made the artists inhibited- tense and tight. They lost some freedom of movement, and it showed. Vin deserves credit for the first post-Code superhero, as well- he was called the Avenger. Nobody was introducing costumed heroes then- I drew the first issue. But ME's distribution was down by then, or it might have caught on.

PAT: *Thanks, Mr. Ayers. I know Vin will appreciate your contribution.*

DICK: It was nice talking to you.

Round 7: Bob Kane

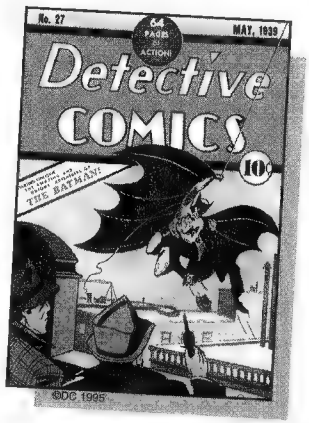
Bob Kane needs no introduction; the phenomenal success of Batman was an integral part of the Golden Age. Batman is one of most recognized characters to hail from the popular media, a treasured archetype of

American mythology. And Mr. Kane wanted to publicly acknowledge Vin Sullivan's instrumental role in the Caped Crusader's genesis.

BOB: I was there at National doing short humor things like Ginger Snap- who was a female Dennis the Menace type.

PAT: *Was Rusty and his Pals your first straight strip?*

BOB: I did that and Clip Carson working with Bill Finger. Then one day I showed Vin some Flash Gordon poses I'd copied, and he said, "You could do the hero stuff. Superman is a hit. Why don't you create a superhero?" I think that was on a Friday, and I said that I could have it on Monday. I went home and gathered my influences. Leonardo's 500-year-old "orinthopter" had the bat-wing look, Zorro supplied the dual identity concept, and I remembered a movie that had the villain dressed up in a bat costume. I put them together and came up with Batman.



DETECTIVE COMICS #27 (May 1939) Acting on Vin's suggestion, with help from Bill Finger, Bob Kane creates Batman.

PAT: *This was in early 1939?*

BOB: Late-1938 early-1939- it was a long time ago. I knew Whit Ellsworth in the early days too. Whit and Vin were both cartoonists and used to do the covers on the old *More Fun* and *Adventure*. I think Vin was the better artist; he had a nice clean line. Sullivan was accomodating and clean-cut; I liked Vincent a lot. But, of course, Whit went on with DC all through the 1940s and 50s and 60s. In fact I think it was Whit who first sent me to Vin at National. They were friends, too, as I recall. I always wanted to be a newspaper strip artist. I collect original strip art from the great days- Popeye and such. But I stayed with comic books because Batman was a steady income. It was a matter of the right place at the right time. But I wanted to keep Batman like Dick Tracy- a little bit cartoony. The villains like the Joker and the Penguin were cartoony.

PAT: *Thanks, Mr. Kane- that's great info!*

Round 8: Sheldon "Shelly" Moldoff

Sheldon Moldoff is a comics professional whose career covers both the Golden Age and Silver Age. His work on Hawkman in the 1940s had an elegance that is always rare- and perhaps never more so than in the early Golden Age, where crude charm was often the order of the day. His Batman work in the 1950s and early 1960s "nurtured" a whole generation of fans. And I always like to mention his creation of Dr. Death, the ultimate "horror host", and the (wonderfully-titled) This Magazine Is Haunted *that he did for Fawcett in the early 1950s.*

SHELLY: I remember in the late 1930s when I went down to Florida where I'd been promised a job at an animation studio that was opening up. But they ran behind schedule, and since my income from DC filler pages was my only income, I called Vin and asked him if I could send him some more. He said, 'Shelly, I'm drowning in filler pages, but go ahead and send them.' He was a good guy to work for.

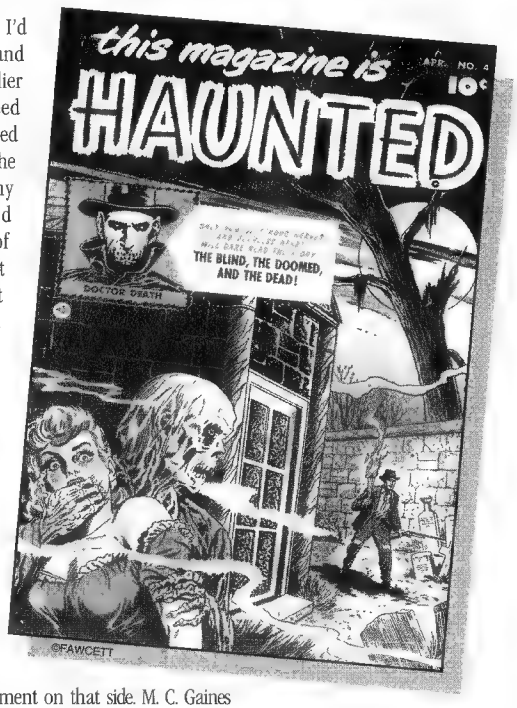
I worked with Vin on the *World's Fair* book, too. He sent me there to gather information about how many buildings had been built and all that- which added up to some pertinent filler pages. It was a worthwhile project

PAT: *So Vin was there when you started at National...*

SHELLY: Right. I'd tried to sell him and Ellsworth stuff earlier but didn't succeed until they regrouped as National. Then he started taking my filler pages. They'd run around two of them per issue. But after that I got involved with the other branch- *All American*.

PAT: *They kept the All-American side of the house pretty separate from the DC side back then.*

SHELLY: It was even a different address, and Sheldon Mayer ran the editorial department on that side. M. C. Gaines had the two addresses- *All American* at 225 Lafayette St. and National at 480 Lexington. Gaines would spend the



THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED #4 (Apr 1952) Dr. Death gives us a gruesome glimpse of horror- Sheldon Moldoff style.

mornings on Lafayette St. and then go over in the afternoons to National Periodicals where Superman was produced.

PAT: *So you and Vin didn't really work together all that much, but he did help you out in the early days of your career?*

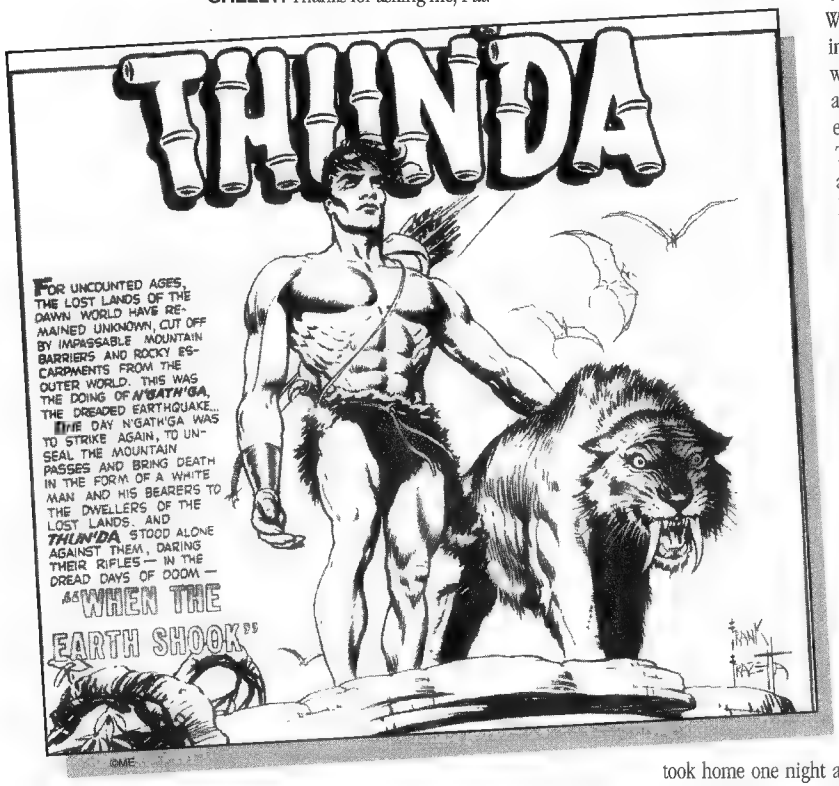
SHELLY: Yes. He was a nice guy, and I knew he'd kept on in comics, but I was too busy working for other companies to chase him down for work.

PAT: *Looks like a lot of key figures in the comic business started with Vin and then went on to other accomplishments in the comics world.*

SHELLY: That about sums it up.

PAT: *It's going to be great. Thanks for taking time to talk with us, Shelly.*

SHELLY: Thanks for asking me, Pat.


THUN'DA
FOR UNCOUNTED AGES, THE LOST LANDS OF THE DAWN WORLD HAVE REMAINED UNKNOWN, CUT OFF BY IMPASSABLE MOUNTAIN BARRIERS AND ROCKY ESCARPMENTS FROM THE OUTER WORLD. THIS WAS THE DOING OF N'GATH'GA, THE DREADED EARTHQUAKE... ONE DAY N'GATH'GA WAS TO STRIKE AGAIN, TO UNSEAL THE MOUNTAIN PASSES AND BRING DEATH IN THE FORM OF A WHITE MAN AND HIS BEARERS TO THE DWELLERS OF THE LOST LANDS. AND THUN'DA STOOD ALONE AGAINST THEM, DARING THEIR RIFLES — IN THE DREAD DAYS OF DOOM — AS "WHEN THE EARTH SHOOK"
©ME

THUN'DA #1 (1952) Splash panel from the ME comic that made Frank Frazetta famous.

Round 9: Frank Frazetta

Frank Frazetta came into his own while working for ME, culminating in the comic book masterpiece Thun'da *#1, in 1952, for which Frazetta created the character and plotted the first tale, and drew the cover and the four Thun'da stories inside. In the 1960s Frazetta's work included painted covers for Warren's* Creepy *and* Eerie, *and for the Ace paperback books reprinting Edgar Rice Burroughs adventure novels. Frazetta's best work is often in the sword and sorcery genre, where he combines perfectly realized power and beauty with a conceptual richness that invests his scenes with that elusive "sense of wonder".*

FRANK: I really didn't get to know Vincent Sullivan. I dealt with Ray Krank. I was nineteen years old, and Vin was a handsome man behind a big desk who nodded at me. He seemed like a nice guy.

PAT: *You did some amazing work for Magazine Enterprises.*

FRANK: Well, as the work on White Indian and Dan Brand improved, they started to get mail where readers got excited about the art, so they decided to let me do an entire comic. I came up with Thun'da, modeled after Tarzan, and they thought it was fine and let me do it. I put the first story in a prehistoric never-never land full of dinosaurs and caveman, because it was more fun that way. But then they brought it into present-day Africa, and it wasn't as imaginative. So I think the art on the first story is the best. Those were exciting times.

PAT: *I recall an old* Treasure Comics *from 1946, that had a "Know Your America" feature signed by Frazetta- yet remarkably primitive. But by the time you got to Standard in 1948 your style had really kicked into gear.*

FRANK: I owe a lot to the art director there, Ralph Mayo. He showed me a two-volume set of books on anatomy that I took home one night and spent the entire night copying every page from both books. I went in, and he laughed when I told him how much I'd learned so fast, but when he saw me work he admitted that something had happened. I was instantly transformed.

PAT: *Mayo was a good artist too. I like some of the Princess Pantha work he did at Standard.*

FRANK: He could draw well but didn't have enough

imagination. I think that's what he saw in me- that maybe I could have the ability and the ideas.

PAT: *And how did you move from Standard to ME?*

FRANK: I can't remember. I know I didn't go looking- they must have contacted me on the strength of my Standard work. And even though I didn't get to know Vin, I'm grateful to him and Ray, because Thun'da was a turning point in my career. It attracted a lot of attention- from syndicates and such. Between that and my *Famous Funnies* covers I shook the industry up a bit.

PAT: *Those Buck Rogers scenes are triumphs, no question about it.*

FRANK: But then I got tied up with Al Capp. I took the job working on Li'l Abner because I was lazy, and the nine years there really stunted my growth.

PAT: *I understand that you've recently recovered from some health problems...*

FRANK: Eight years with a mis-diagnosed thyroid condition. The medicine I took just made me worse. Finally, after I couldn't work anymore and was seeing double, the eye-doctor helped me convince the others that it was a thyroid problem. Once we got the medication straight, I recovered very fast. It's amazing- chemicals make us who we are.

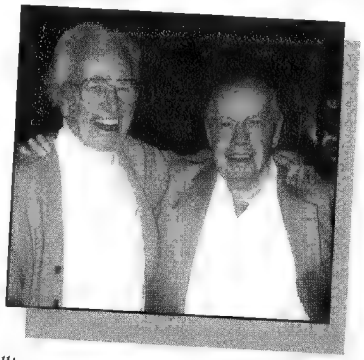
PAT: *We're all glad that you're back in shape. Talking to you I can see how you've gone so far. Anatomy and imagination- you make it sound simple.*

FRANK: Right- solid figure drawing set against an interesting situation- action and entertainment.

PAT: *Thanks for talking to us, Mr. Frazetta.*

Round 10: Chad Grothkopf

Chad Grothkopf was another artist who found his way working with Vin. He drew Radio Squad for late 1930s issues of More Fun, *written by Jerry Siegel, and later drew the Sandman in* Adventure Comics. *He also worked for Timely, and for Fawcett- where he created Hoppy, the Marvel Bunny. After that he drew the Howdy Doody Sunday page and storyboarded the Underdog cartoon series.*



PAT: *Chad, tell us about you and Vin Sullivan.*

CHAD: Vin Sullivan was the light in the window for me. I came to New York- expecting to make a million in the big magazines- but nobody would touch me, and it was rather dark. But when I showed up at National, Vin was very kind- he taught me the business. You didn't work for Vin, you worked with him.

PAT: *Vin has a rep for being a great boss. Is that true?*

CHAD: Yes. I missed my first deadline, but he didn't make a big deal out of it. He told me to give myself enough time. Vin made the comic books a profession. A lot of people in the business with big names who made big money owe everything to him. I've worked for big Hollywood companies, but that work with Vin was the most fun... and taught me more, too. He showed me the common ground between animation storyboarding and comic books.

Vin was a quiet guy- never shouted at you. I'd done cartoon stuff, but he gave me my first straight adventure assignments.

WHIMSICAL HOPPY splash by Chad from Fawcett's Funny Animals.

PAT: *Like Radio Squad?*

CHAD: And the Sandman, which I took over when Flessel went into advertising art. And Cliff Crosby, which I wrote and drew and lettered- that was fun.

I was getting $5 for a cartoon from Street & Smith, but Vin kept us busy at $7 a page- which wasn't bad. Without Vin and DC, the comic book industry couldn't have happened. I've got to say that of all the people I've worked with, I'd say he was the top man. Those were the happy days. And that's about it.

CHAD GROTHKOPF with Vin in Westport, Connecticut, October 1993.

PAT: *Well, you can't beat an ending like that. Thanks, Chad.*

Conclusion

Well- the round robin speaks for itself. What better way to celebrate Vin's contribution to comic books than to talk with some of the great creators whose talents and careers he's helped along the way? The only thing left for me to say is- Thanks, Vin! Comic book fans everywhere owe you a debt that will never be paid. ■

COLLECTING

By Michael Naiman

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JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS

When all encompassing knowledge is desired or that unanswerable question must be explained, what better place to turn to than your computer, the Internet, or your encyclopedia on CD ROM? But way back B.C. (before computers) there was only ONE source of knowledge that could provide the answer to any of the problems that life might throw at you!

What would this be you ask? Certainly anyone remotely interested in Carl Barks and his creations could answer that question... The Junior Woodchucks' Guide!

"But surely Mike, the *JWG* doesn't really exist, does it?"

The answer just might come as a surprise to Disney duck fans and Barks collectors... because "Yes Virginia, there is an actual *Junior Woodchucks' Guide*!"

DISNEYANA'S RAREST ITEM?

What might prove to be one of Disneyana's rarest items was actually available as a premium when you subscribed to and completed your set of *Disney's Wonderful World of Knowledge*. This 16 volume children's encyclopedia was originally published in Italy in 1971 and then updated and enlarged as an English edition in 1973 by Danbury Press, a division of Grolier Enterprises (the Grolier encyclopedia people). The first US edition featured art work by the original Italian artists Giovan Battista Carpi and Claudio Mazzoli... and included the Disney characters of Feathry and Rockerduck... European members of the Disney Duck universe only seen heretofore in European editions of Disney comics.

The *Junior Woodchucks' Guide* is a hardcover book measuring 5.75 inches wide by 8.75 inches tall... and contains a whopping 214 full color pages.

The scarce "Duck tome" is modeled after the *Boy Scouts Handbook* and is full of helpful suggestions on camping, rules governing tool use, and several secret codes. Each of these sections is profusely illustrated with drawings of Donald, Uncle Scrooge, and of course, Huey, Dewey and Louie. During my research (which included an extensive number of telephone conversations with other collectors around the country) I have found only one other person who is familiar with this "duck oddity" and coincidentally owned a copy! So as of this writing, I've located only a total of two copies.

And now for the unanswered questions... "How many were originally printed?" Answer unknown! "How many are still in existence?" Answer unknown! "What is it worth?" Answer unknown! "What might be the cause of its apparent rarity?" Technically... Answer unknown! But maybe after paying for the multi-volume set, parents were just not interested in spending any more money or maybe lost the redemption coupon. Who knows?

Although we don't know a lot, those who have seen it agree... The *Junior Woodchucks' Guide* from Danbury Press is one of the most unique and enjoyable Woodchucks collectibles.

THE "GOOD SCOUTS" CONNECTION

Barks first introduced the world to the Junior Woodchucks in *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #125 (February, 1951).

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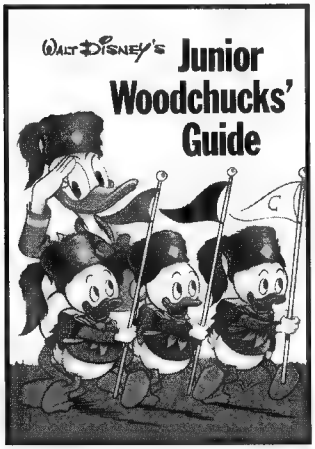
"1939 ALL STAR PARADE"

Another extremely rare collectible to surface features the prototypical Junior Woodchucks on an outing. It is a premium glass from 1939 which measures 4.75 inches tall by 2.50 inches in diameter. On the glass is a band which is printed in blue letters "1939 Walt Disney All Star Parade." Featured on the glass are Huey, Dewey, & Louie dressed up as "Boy Scouts" looking on as Donald is rolling up his sleeve about to grab an ax to chop down a tree... all to impress his heart-throb, Donna Duck, (a pre-Daisy love interest). Unfortunately for Donald, one of the nephews has hidden a sign which says "Petrified Tree!"



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But...the real seed of their origin just might have been planted way back in 1938 when Carl worked on the animated cartoon "Good Scouts."

Working as a writer along with Jack Hannah on the "Good Scouts", Barks had the nephews involved in madcap antics that were always at the expense of Donald's comfort.

THE COMICS!

While Barks did script 18 issues of *Huey, Dewey and Louie Junior Woodchucks* (issues 6-17, 19-23 & 25) in the early 1970's, his strongest representation of the boys can be found in the Comics and Stories' features from earlier years. Treat yourself to some good storytelling and pick

THE EXTREMELY RARE
"1939 Walt Disney All Star Parade" collectible glass which shows prototypical Junior Woodchucks Huey, Dewey, & Louie dressed as Boy Scouts.

THE SACRED BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE
The "Junior Woodchucks' Guide" (1973) from Danbury Press.

ON THE TRAIL TO ADVENTURE
Huey, Dewey, & Louie Junior Woodchucks #6 (Jul 1970, facing page).

QUI, QUO & QUA AND LE GIOVANI MARMOTTE

Woodchucks *Italiano*

Originally published as a six issue series in Italy beginning in October of 1969, the Junior Woodchucks' Guide has proven to be a popular series for many years. Gaudenzio Capelli (managing editor for Disney comics from 1980-1994) and Elisa Penna wrote most of the text. Giovan Battista Carpi did the excellent painted art on Guidebooks #1 (1969), #3 (1977) and #5 (1982), and also on the Great Mogul Guidebook (1980), which, although not included in the numbered Woodchucks guidebooks, is certainly related to them.

Other Italian artists on the guidebooks have been Marco Rota (also covers to #3, #4 and #6), Giancarlo Gatti (cover to #2) and, more recently, Andrea Freccero. Guidebook #2 (1975) had French artists involved with the illustrations. Mondadori published these guidebooks from 1969 through the 1980s, reprinting each of them several times.

Starting in 1992, Disney-Libri has reprinted the whole series, redesigning the cover logos, and adding two new ones (#7 and #8). Besides the Woodchucks' Guidebooks, several others have been published, such as the Grandma Duck Guidebook (1970, Carpi art), the Gyro Gearloose Guidebook (1973, Brazilian art) and the Sport Goofy Guidebook (1984, Carpi art).

— BY ALBERTO BECATTINI

up a copy of *WDC&S* containing a Junior Woodchucks adventure... or one can obtain them all in one fell swoop via the finely printed (and affordable) *Carl Barks Library of Walt Disney's Comics & Stories in Color* currently being issued in a 51 volume set by Gladstone.

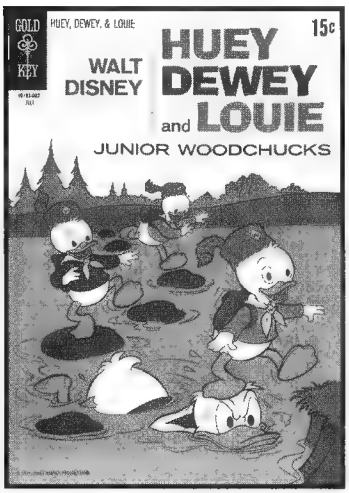
For the hardcore Woodchucks fan don't miss Don Rosa's tale of the origins of the *Junior Woodchucks' Guide* in "Guardians of the Lost Library" in *Uncle Scrooge Adventures* #27 (July, 1994).

As a collector in search of these rare little gems of memorabilia, be prepared to emulate the wonderful Woodchuck credo...you must be resourceful, ingenious and persistent!

Happy collecting... and don't go anywhere without your *Junior Woodchucks' Guide*! ■

Checklist: *Barks' Woodchucks*

- ❑ WDCS 125 Feb-51
- ❑ WDCS 132 Sep-51
- ❑ WDCS 136 Jan-52
- ❑ WDCS 150 Mar-53
- ❑ WDCS 158 Nov-53
- ❑ WDCS 181 Oct-55
- ❑ WDCS 199 Apr-57
- ❑ WDCS 213 Jun-58
- ❑ WDCS 221 Feb-59
- ❑ WDCS 227 Aug-59
- ❑ WDCS 232 Jan-60
- ❑ WDCS 238 Jul-60
- ❑ WDCS 253 Oct-61
- ❑ WDCS 261 Jun-62
- ❑ WDCS 276 Sep-63
- ❑ WDCS 279 Dec-63
- ❑ WDCS 282 Mar-64
- ❑ WDCS 294 Mar-65
- ❑ US 5 Mar-May-54
- ❑ US 7 Sep-Nov-54
- ❑ US 10 Jun-Aug-55
- ❑ US 12 Dec-55-Feb-56
- ❑ US 13 Mar-May-56
- ❑ US 14 Jun-Aug-56
- ❑ US 19 Sep-Nov-57
- ❑ US 37 Mar-May-62
- ❑ US 44 Aug-63
- ❑ US 48 Mar-64
- ❑ US 49 May-64
- ❑ US 55 Feb-55
- ❑ US 57 May-65
- ❑ US 60 Nov-65
- ❑ US 61 Jan-66
- ❑ DD 46 Mar-Apr-56
- ❑ DD 60 Jul-Aug-58
- ❑ DD 117 Jan-68 script by Barks-art by Strobl
- ❑ FC 367 Jan-Feb-52 "A Christmas for Shacktown"
- ❑ FC 408 Jul-Aug-52 Donald Duck and the Golden Helmet
- ❑ JW 6 Jul-70 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 7 Oct-70 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 8 Jan-71 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 9 Apr-71 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 10 Jul-71 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 11 Oct-71 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 12 Jan-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 13 Mar-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 14 May-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 15 Jul-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 16 Sep-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 17 Nov-72 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 19 Apr-73 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 20 May-73 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 21 Jul-73 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 22 Sep-73 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 23 Nov-73 script by Barks
- ❑ JW 25 Mar-74 script by Barks



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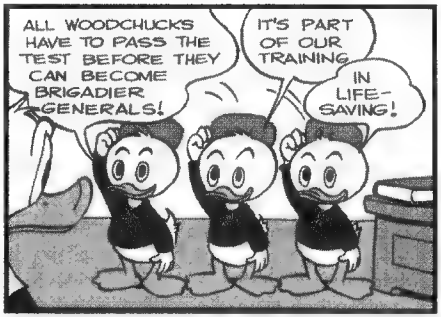

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1ST PANEL TO DEPICT The "Junior Woodchucks' Guide" by name from *Uncle Scrooge* #5 (Mar-May 1954).

WOODCHUCKS REPORTING FOR DUTY First appearence ever from *WDC&S* #125 (Feb 1951).

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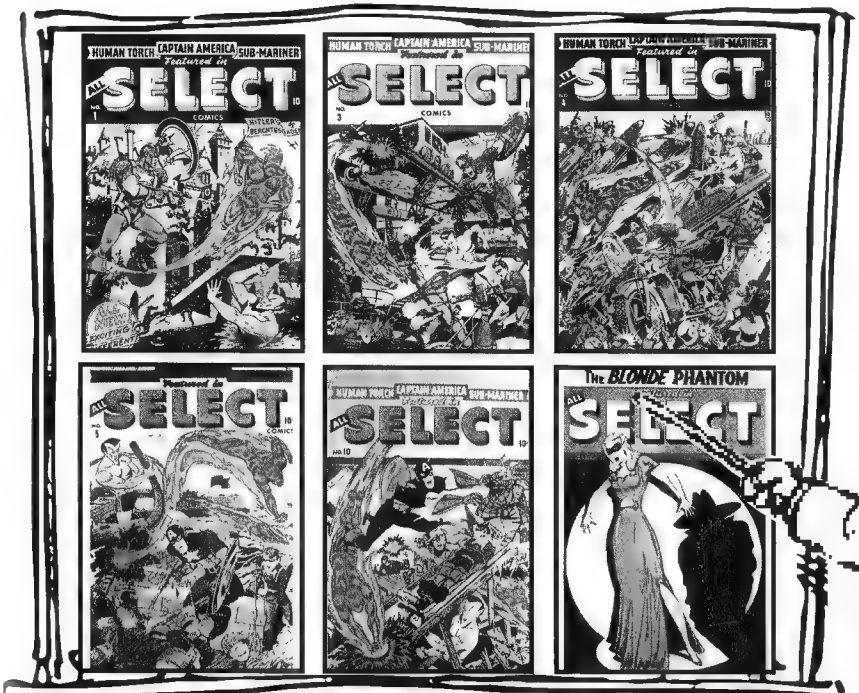


Professor Gentner's Gallery of Greats

ALL SELECT
(clockwise from top left)
#1, #3, #4, #11, #10, and #5

All Select ©MEG 1995

Timely Comics pushed their "Big 3" characters for all they were worth during the years 1943 and 1944. Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, and Captain America peered out from the newsstands on titles like *All Winners, USA, Daring, Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, Captain America, Marvel Mystery,* and my spot-light title this month... *All Select*!!

All Select Comics traded upon the success of *All Winners*, utilizing the tried and true formula of Alex Schomburg covers outside, and their Big 3 characters (with others) inside. The "others" included the "Whizzer", whose funky speed powers were mongoose generated. Maybe the mongoose was radioactive, giving Whizzer the proportional strength and speed of a mongoose!! Nah, too corny! But hey, he was "Select"! The Destroyer, The Black Widow, Miss America, and Blonde Phantom rounded out the cast of characters.

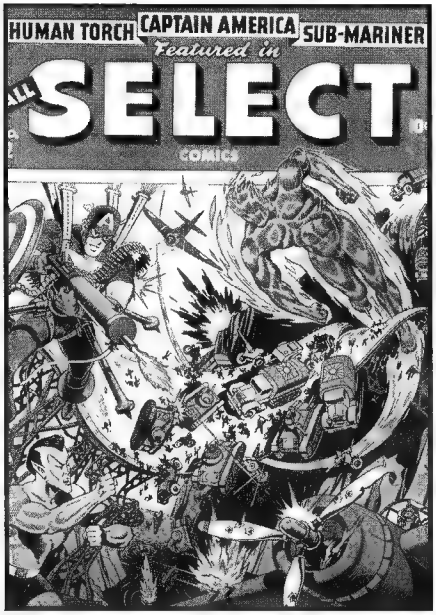
Debuting with issue #1 (Fall, 1943) *All Select* ran until #11 (Fall, 1946). The distinguishing features which set this title apart were it's beautiful green-toned covers by Alex Schomburg, and ALL of the Big 3 were on covers of 1-5 and 10! The only other title in the "Timely tidal wave of titles" where all three appeared all together was *All Winners*.

The semantics of the words *All Select* implies that every character in the book is a "Select" one. (One questions how "Select" Black Widow or the "Whizzer" were.) The fact that these characters had already been "select-ed" umpteen times before, rather dilutes the awe-inspiring prospect of All "Select" - but what the heck, it's a cool title anyway.

With only eleven issues in the run, one would think the completist collector wouldn't have that difficult a time putting the run together. My own experience, however, has been that this is an incredibly tough title to collect! Issue #1, which was by no means easy to find, was considerably easier to find than #2-4. (I searched four years for nice copies of #2, #3, and #4!) Price ranges for Fine copies of *All Select* currently run as follows: #1 $800-$1,000, #2 $750-900, #3-5 $600-800, #6-9 $400-600, #10 $500-700, and #11 $250-400.

HARD TO FIND
***All Select* #2 sports one of the most dynamic WWII covers in the Timely universe.**

I place *All Select* #2 on my "favorites list" because I believe it is a quintessential example of Alex Schomburg's World War II output. Green covers are so much more interesting when you compare them to the glut of hot orange and red *Marvel Mystery, Captain America, Sub-Mariner*, and *Human Torch* covers. The cooler aspect of the green tones plays off well against the frenetic action packed into the cover art. Issue #2 was also by far the most difficult (and expensive) to obtain. Add to this that there is a Red Skull/Captain America story inside and VIOLA'! *All Select* #2 is a major "hens tooth!"



I question just how many issues of *All Select* survived the ravages of time, paper drives, and mothers. Mid World War II books can be plentiful if you like Don Winslow and the Lone Ranger. Yet, *All Select* seems as tough to find as *Daring Mystery*, which is known as a "super tough" run! It could be that *All Select* was underappreciated at the time... plus the fact that the title was launched so late in the war probably didn't help either. There is also the notion that Timely's "Big 3" characters were being squeezed incredibly hard to promote circulation and it was perhaps the "sameness" of the look that obscured *All Select* at the newsstand. More of the "same" may have been what it looked like... but more of the BEST was what was actually published.

You can't help but notice the shift to combinations of the "Big 3" Timely characters in order to boost sales company wide in 1943-44. As I mentioned before, *All Winners, USA, Daring, Marvel Mystery, Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, Captain America,* and *All Select* all pinned their hopes on the same faces. Of these titles that shifted to the Timely headliners, "Daring" was the latest starting with #9 (Fall, 1944). It also was canceled first with #12 (Fall, 1945) a harbinger of what was to come.

All Winners checked out with #21 (Winter, 1946) and *USA* stopped with #17 (Fall, 1945). The Big 3's own titles hung on along with *Marvel Mystery* a bit longer, but the charisma wasn't strong enough to last. In each of these instances, Timely put forward what they believed to be their strongest hand... but alas, to no avail.

All Select "shifted format" with the debut of the Blonde Phantom in issue #11 (Fall, 1946), and that's all she wrote for *All Select*... one of Timely's more intriguing and obscure hero titles. The title took Blonde Phantom's name with the next issue and continued until #22 (March, 1949). At that point, the title was transformed into a romance magazine called *Lovers*. (Ech!)

Say, here's a question for the ages: I wonder which is the most unendurable and embarrassing fate for a superhero title... becoming a romance book, a Western book, or a funny animal book?

Answer: For those of us who love the hero books, it's tough to care! ■

Steve has been a comic collector since 1960 and moved from Silver Age to Golden Age in 1988. He is now primarily interested in World War II era books and pre-code "good girl" art books. Steve's favorite artists are Alex Schomburg, Matt Baker, Joe Doolin, and Lilly Renee. Stephen Gentner wrote for the 'original' Comic Book Marketplace *and was a regular contributor to the* Overstreet Monthly *and the* Gold & Silver Quarterly. *In "real life" he is a third generation Hotelier, and operates the Imperial Hotel in downtown Portland, Oregon.*

PAPER PAPER PAPER

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10) Page Lightening

An Origin

By Keif Fromm

To read the introductions of Superman, Batman, Capt. Marvel, Human Torch, Sub-Mariner, and most other major characters, one must simply acquire a copy of (or a reprint) of a single issue. This is not the case with the origin of Fawcett Comics' Captain Marvel Junior. To read the "elusive" origin of this important Fawcett star, a collector must locate three different issues from two separate titles.

Part I

The first part of Captain Marvel Junior's origin trilogy begins in *Master Comics* #21 (December, 1941) and is illustrated by Mac Raboy. The tale begins by saying: "Introducing the scourge of Europe...The terror of the age...That one and only Captain Nazi! But close on his trail is Bulletman to see that the one-man blitz is a flop...And just to make sure of things, Mighty Captain Marvel sits in on the game to play his hand!"

As Hitler is addressing his warlords in a secluded mountain retreat in Germany, he informs them of his greatest achievement in humbling America. As Hitler introduces Capt. Nazi, he shows him a diagram depicting Capt. Marvel, Bulletman, Spy Smasher, and Minute-Man. Hitler roars, "These are your new opponents Capt. Nazi! Your first job will be to rid America of those weaklings called heroes!"

When Capt. Nazi gives a brief demonstration of his abilities, Hitler instructs him to begin his duties destroying the USA. Once Capt. Nazi finishes terrorizing a crowd, Bulletman and Capt. Marvel get wind of this new threat and team-up to thwart him. After pulling the rails up from a subway platform, and toppling a carnival's loaded Ferris wheel, Capt. Nazi publicly informs the American public that he will blow up the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Capt. Marvel arrives just in time to take the impact of the bomb and discovers Bulletman and Bulletgirl arriving on the scene.

As the dust settles Capt. Marvel finds a note from Capt.

Only recently has the origin trilogy of Captain Marvel Junior

Trilogy

Nazi. It says, "You'd better keep your snooping nose in Whiz Comics, Captain Marvel...Because I'm coming over there next month to beat your brains out! I'll get Bulletman later." signed Capt. Nazi.

Part II

The second part is featured in *Whiz Comics* #25 (December, 1941) and is illustrated by C.C. Beck AND Mac Raboy. The chronicle continues with Billy Batson addressing the reader and saying, "He's here folks! Smashing his way right out of Master Comics and into our own Whiz, Capt. Nazi is cutting a path of sabotage and destruction across the country! Can nothing stop him?"

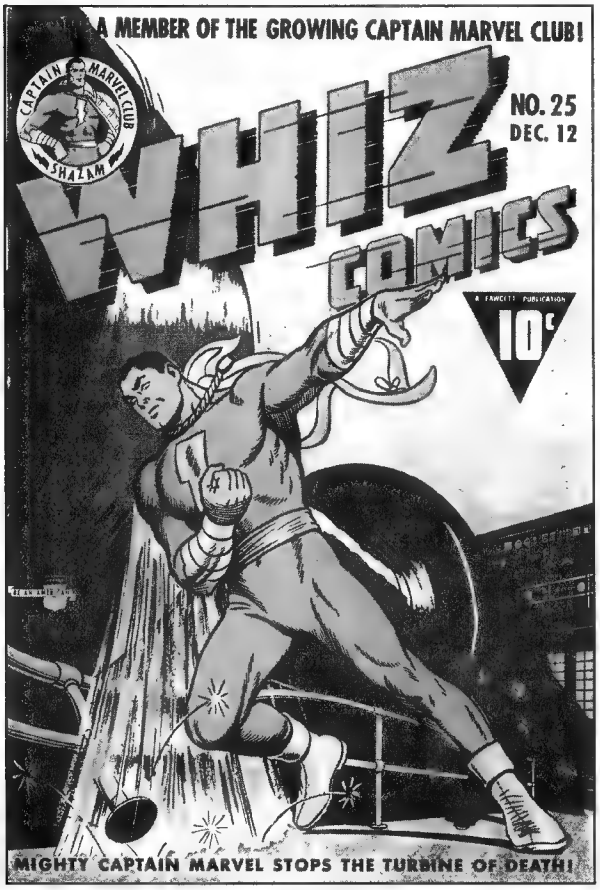
As Billy Batson reads the news on WHIZ Radio, his transmission is interrupted when Capt. Nazi cuts in with his own broadcast. After Billy transforms into Capt. Marvel, he finds himself tangling with Capt. Nazi once more and saving WHIZ's engineer, Whitney Murphy from being thrown from a radio tower. Once again, Capt. Marvel sees

MASTER COMICS #21 (DEC 1941)

received the long awaited recognition it deserves.

Capt. Nazi evade his clutches.

Shortly after that, Billy and his team cover the ignition of a gigantic defense dam and power project. As the senator pushes the power button, all the spectators begin hearing Capt. Nazi's boisterous laughter from above. It seems that he has sabotaged the turbines so they will continue to accelerate until the power station and dam blow up. Billy Batson learns of this and speeds away to become Capt. Marvel. As "the big red cheese" (Capt. Marvel) leans his



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WHIZ COMICS #25 (DEC 1941)

shoulder against the turbine wheel to wear it down, he finds that Capt. Nazi has escaped once again.

While Billy and Whitney are at their next broadcast at a nearby airfield, Billy sees through his binoculars that Capt. Nazi is strangling the pilot of America's newest secret fighter plane. Capt. Marvel ends up saving the pilot and plane, and punches Capt. Nazi unconscious into the bay below.

Not long after this slug-fest, we are introduced to the young Freddy Freeman and his grandfather. As they fish, they see the body of Capt. Nazi floating in the water. Freddy's grandfather pulls Capt. Nazi aboard the dinghy in an attempt to save him, but the evil agent of Hitler awakens and slugs the elderly man into the water (killing him instantly). Immediately the young Freddy Freeman attacks Capt. Nazi with an oar. In retaliation, Capt. Nazi wrestles with Freddy, whacks him with the oar, and watches the boy fall into the bay to drown.

As Capt. Marvel is flying overhead, he sees the boy floating in the water. Scooping him up, Capt. Marvel transports Freddy to a hospital where he awaits (as Billy Batson) news of the youth's condition. Billy eventually discovers from the nurse that the boy's back is broken and that if he lives, he will be crippled for life.

As the climax of one of the greatest origin stories in comic book history, Billy takes a desperate chance and carries the youngster through the ancient terminal (at the stroke of midnight) to visit the ghost of the wizard, Shazam! The ancient wise man asserts to Billy, "What has already come to pass cannot be changed by any power of mine." Shazam does explain to Billy that as Capt. Marvel, he can pass on some of his mighty powers to the boy. When the helpless juvenile views Capt. Marvel and speaks his name, a flash of lightning is seen and the boy says, "I'm all well again! I'm strong, I-I'm like you!" Capt. Marvel then exclaims, "That's right! You're Captain Marvel Junior!"

As they depart, Capt. Marvel declares to Capt. Marvel Jr. "You will have to go through life in your own form, but whenever you need me, speak my name and as Capt. Marvel Jr. you will be able to do the things I do. Now go back in [the hospital] and get well. And then I'm going to send you into *Master Comics* to take care of Capt. Nazi."

Part III

The third and final part of this great Golden Age epic is told in *Master Comics* #22 (January, 1942), illustrated by Mac Raboy. It begins when a shriveled old man called Dr. Eternity, peers at a list of ten names that he has slated for "the wax death", his way of displaying figures in his private museum. The first three names... Peter Costo (Pete Costanza/ Comic Artist for Fawcett), Sir Clarence Beck (C.C. Beck/Comic Artist for Fawcett), and Irwin Wile (Layout Artist for Fawcett's non-comic magazines) have already been victimized and crossed off the list.

Dr. Eternity summons four of his thugs and instructs them to capture his next martyr of the list (Sir Henry Eliot). Meanwhile, at the home of Sir Eliot and his wife, Sergeant Kent, Susan Kent (AKA Bulletgirl), and Jim Barr (AKA Bulletman) attempt to discern whether the threatening note from Dr. Eternity is fact or fiction.

Suddenly, Lady Eliot screams, "Look at the window!" As they all look in horror at a gruesome face peering in, the lights go out. When Jim Barr leaps forward to turn on the light, they see that Sir Henry Eliot is gone!

Once the hysteria has stopped, Jim and Susan meet outside to discuss their next move. Jim tells Susan that Bulletman must handle this case without Bulletgirl's aide. The panel of Bulletman flying away segues into Dr. Eternity speaking to Capt. Nazi by telephone. Dr. Eternity brags to Capt. Nazi, "I got Eliot today... and he's preserved as the others for eternity! Yes, Sir Thomas Welch is next!" Capt. Nazi replies by saying, "Gute! Carry on herr Doctor. I must leave now. I'm in a hurry [because] this Capt. Marvel swine is on my tail!"

Since Sir Thomas Welch received a note similar to Sir Eliot, Bulletman decides to wait patiently in the trees outside the home of Dr. Eternity's next victim. Finally, Bulletman hears a commotion coming from inside and finds that Dr. Eternity's goons have broken in via a window upstairs. Once Bulletman pummels the four intruders, he speeds off to a destination close by to find a young boy on a crutch limping toward him.

The youngster approaches Bulletman and says, "Am I glad to see you!" Bulletman responds by saying, "Same here sonny. Maybe I can help you... are you lost?" The boy exclaims, "Gosh no! I'm not lost. I just got over from *Whiz Comics*. Billy Batson sent me over here to *Master Comics*." After speaking "Captain Marvel!" and showing Bulletman that he is now Captain Marvel Junior, they both soar off to the museum to do battle with Dr. Eternity and Capt. Nazi. During this climactic confrontation, Dr. Eternity is defeated, but Captain Nazi evades the clutches of justice once more.

As Bulletman and Capt. Marvel Jr. bid each other farewell for now, the epic concludes with a final panel showing CMJ addressing the readers. He announces, "Hope you'll be on hand next month, fellas... I'm going to be in 'my own' exciting adventure strip!"

Only recently has the origin trilogy of Captain Marvel Junior received its much deserved and long awaited recognition. With *Master Comics* #21, one not only sees a heroic teaming of Captain Marvel and Bulletman, but the reader is also introduced to one of the Golden Age's most infamous and interesting villains... Captain Nazi. *Whiz Comics* #25 contains spectacular non-stop brawling between Captain Marvel and Captain Nazi, and introduces the first of many inductees into the Fawcett Marvel Family, including Captain Marvel Junior. The climactic conclusion in *Master* #22 depicts Bulletman and Captain Marvel Jr. joining forces to outwit both Captain Nazi, and the deranged anti-American Dr. Eternity.

All three issues are examples of "marvelous" plot and character development, panel art storytelling, and near perfect "linking" between issues. The superb artistry of Mac Raboy and C.C. Beck must be seen to be appreciated. These two comic book giants gave life to characters that changed the course of comic book history. But whether you're a Fawcett fan or not, it's easy to see why these three comics are an elusive origin... to say the least. ■

MASTER COMICS #22 (JAN 1942)

WHO WAS HAL JORDAN?

JOHN BROOME MADE UP THE RULES OF THE GREEN LANTERN GAME... AND HAL JORDAN PLAYED!

BY DENNIS MALLONEE

"Hal Jordan had a fine reputation as an ace test pilot whose remarkable lack of fear was known to all his associates. But Hal never dreamed his reputation was so widespread that an unearthly being would single him out to receive the greatest gift in the universe." —John Broome

"Battery of Power, seek in this strange world. If there be a deserving one here, seek and find, and bring him to me. He must be one without fear. Entirely without fear."

—Abin Sur

A lot can change over the course of thirty-five years. New circumstances often yield new perspectives. But the question here is not the question of who and what the Silver Age Green Lantern became in the hands of later writers. The question here is the question of who Hal Jordan was in the hands of the writer who first chronicled his adventures.

Who was Hal Jordan under the guiding hand of John Broome?

He was a wonderful enigma.

He was full of contradictions.

He was a grown man who had been given the responsibility of possessing the ultimate toy.

With that toy, he made a game out of being a hero. And it isn't until you understand the basic premise—that being Green Lantern was merely a game Hal Jordan played—that the context of John Broome's stories begins to make sense.

The rules of the game were well defined. And so long as John Broome continued to write the series, there was a sense that Hal knew the rules so well that he would never violate them. The basic rule was codified in Green Lantern's oath. "In brightest day, in blackest night, no evil shall escape my sight. Let those who worship evil's might beware my power, Green Lantern's light." The rule stated that Green Lantern would always be an enemy of evil, in whatever form it might choose to take.

There was also a rule that required Green Lantern to respond to any instructions that might come to him out of the Battery of Power. That, as we learned in *Showcase* #23, was a promise he had made to Abin Sur. The mystery of where those instructions were coming from was a mystery that intrigued Hal, but the answer to the mystery proved to be of no concern whatsoever insofar as it related to the playing of the game.

Even the 24-hour time limit and rule that prevented Green Lantern's power from directly affecting anything yellow were aspects of the game. The restrictions always came into play, and circumstance always required Green Lantern to come up with clever methods of getting around the limitations.

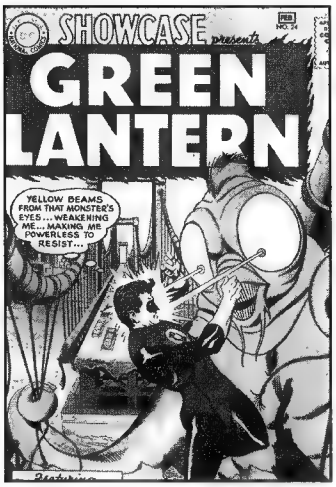
And the ultimate goal of the game?

Well...the goal was the winning of his girlfriend, Carol Ferris.

But there was an inherent contradiction in the rules of the game, because the rule regarding Carol was, that even though Green Lantern could have had her any time he wanted her, she was off limits. Given that it was Hal Jordan who was intent on marrying Carol Ferris, given that Green Lantern was merely the game Hal played, the fact that Carol was so infatuated with the game meant that she wasn't taking Hal's romantic interest in her seriously. It was the one aspect

AN UNKNOWN ENEMY-- MANIPULATING A MONSTROUS PUPPET TO FIRE DEADLY RAY-BLASTS AT ME!

of the game he was playing that Hal desperately wanted to be real. But it was also the one aspect of the game that never could be real.



So who was Hal Jordan?

Hal Jordan was a hero.

And, later revisionist "history" to the contrary, he was of bonafide hero material before he ever became Green Lantern. Indeed, it was Hal's innate heroism that served as his chief qualification to wield Green Lantern's ring.

To illustrate this, we cite a curious contradiction in the very first Hal Jordan story between the opening splash-page text and the body of the tale. The John Broome quote cited at the beginning of this article is from the first splash page in *Showcase* #22. What it seems to be saying is that Hal's existence was already known to the alien Green Lantern, Abin Sur; that it was on the basis of Hal's widespread reputation as a man without fear that he was chosen to be Abin Sur's successor. But in the context of the story itself, this is clearly not so. What we see in the story is that when the alien Green Lantern's spacecraft crashes on Earth, he seems to know nothing of this planet and instructs his Battery of Power—the green lantern itself—to seek out its new master.

HAL JORDAN CLASSIC...

"THE CREATURE THAT COULDN'T DIE"
Showcase #24
(Feb 1960, above)

"THE INVISIBLE DESTROYER"
Showcase #23
(Dec 1959, right)

"MENACE OF THE GIANT PUPPET!"
Green Lantern #1
(Aug 1960, previous page).

©DC 1995

The only possible interpretation is that the "unearthly being" referred to on the splash page isn't Abin Sur. It was the Battery of Power that selected Hal Jordan. And what John Broome is saying is that the Battery made the choice on the basis of who Hal was known to be. That the Battery could have chosen someone else is a well-established fact—Hal was the closest possible choice, and time was of the essence, so it was Hal who was chosen—but the fact that someone else could have been Green Lantern doesn't change the fact that Hal was qualified.

But by what criterion did the semi-intellect of the Battery make its selection? If the defining characteristic of the man was supposed to be Abin Sur's instruction that he should have no fear, then what exactly did that mean? Why did Abin Sur consider a lack of fear to be a necessary (if not necessarily sufficient) qualification for a Green Lantern?

It has been observed that a literal interpretation of the lack-of-fear qualification for being Green Lantern makes no sense. Fear is a survival mechanism. If you don't have any sense of fear, you're going to have a tendency to rush headlong into situations that will get you killed, power ring or not. If Green Lanterns really didn't have any fear, there wouldn't be very many of them who live very long. But as a metaphor, the qualification makes perfect sense. If a hero is someone who does what needs to be done without regard for personal consequences, then a hero is someone who has no fear.

In Hal Jordan, the Battery found a hero.

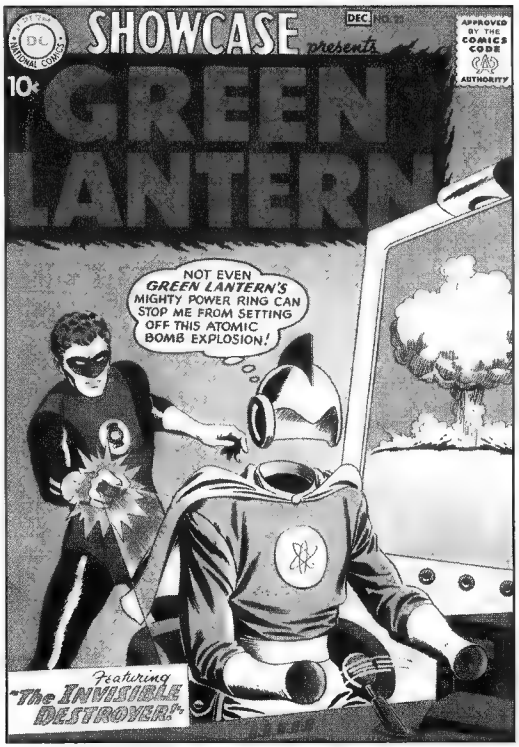
It found a man capable of setting aside fear.

It found a man who could commit himself to task of wielding the responsibility of ultimate power.

It found a man who could take childlike pleasure out the of accepting the limitations and restrictions that accompanied that power, by making it into an elaborate, well-defined game.

So who was Hal Jordan?

As long as John Broome was writing the character, Hal Jordan was our Green Lantern. ■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All Star 8
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Green Lantern 1
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Sensation 1
Adventure 40/48
All American 16/19
Batman 1
Capt. America (1)-10
Red Raven 1
Whiz 2

Others are:

Suspense Comics 3
Mystery Men 1-10
Silver Streak 6
Blue Beetle 1
All Winners 1
Daredevil Comics 1
Hit Comics 1/5
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THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Market Moves To New Heights

How many times have you heard this saying over the past few years? "These books are just becoming too expensive!" The books in question this time are Timelys, and last time it was Silver Age. Next time? That is the question a great deal of collectors are asking themselves right now. But while only a few sit back and wait for the market's direction to reveal itself, the remainder are buying at a record pace. While prices being paid for Golden Age is astronomical, and sellers attempt to establish a ceiling for their books, buyers keep breaking through it and setting new records.

A few months ago, Timely was the only game in town when it came to MANY multiples of guide, but no longer. Granted, Timely and DC still hold the #1 and #2 spots for the majority of Golden Age collectors, but many are turning to look at the true undervalued and under-appreciated books from Fox, Fawcett, Quality, Standard/Nedor, Fiction House, and MLJ banners. These collectors are by no means any less passionate than those grabbing the headlines with the records established at Sotheby's for the DC and Timely material. They are quietly pushing prices upward, so sit down with your Gerber's and discover some of the many incredible issues from the second and third tier companies (hopefully before the rest of fandom does). Of special interest are some of the lesser known Matt Baker and Jack Kamen covers, the last few Spirit covers, and 1950's precode horror covers. Check these out before prices go up.

A few sales: All Select #2 VF/NM $2400; Superman #24 FN++ $850; Tessy the Typist #1 VF- $120; Captain Aero V1/#7 (#1) FN/VF $575; Candy #1 GD $25; Bulletman #1 VG $595; Kid Comics #1 AppFN $800; Modern Comics #53 FN+ $250; Young Allies #3 VF- $2,000; Wondercomics #20 FN/VF $220, Jo Jo Comics #17 FN+ $145, Fantoman #2 VG/FN $525; Amazing Adventure Funnies #1 VF/NM $3,200; All Surprise #1 NM $350; Gay Comics #1 FN $235; Wings #91 VF- $125.

By the time you read this, the San Diego Convention will be history and as it usually happens after San Diego, a new outlook on the market will be in affect (the "post San Diego effect"). Yet, as this is being written before the convention, here are a few of the books that are making the "rumor mill" run rampant with speculation about record prices and intense competition: All-Star #8; Terrific #5; Suspense #3, Superman #1; Our Army at War #81 & #83, All Select (any issue); Fox Good Girl Covers; Seven Seas; Phantom Lady; Schomburg Timely books; Schomburg airbrush covers; odd-ball Kirby books, Golden Age Sub-Mariner; DC Keys in the $500-$5000 range; Very high grade Showcase and Brave & Bold, Seduction of the Innocent and Parade of Pleasure books, All Star Western #10, Gold and Silver Flash, and just about any Timely book that is priced at or below market levels.

Silver Age

"Keep quiet, or someone might notice us!" This seems to be the motto of Silver Age purists right now. Taking full advantage of the fact that many collectors and dealers would love to free up cash in order to play in the Golden Age marketplace, Silver Age collectors have been getting some great bargains of late. Competition at the top seems to still be fierce for the best books. Just a cursory overview of the results Sotheby's received from the "Mohawk Valley Collection" at their June auction should convince anyone that believes Silver is dead to rethink their position.

Journey into Mystery #83 VG $650; Flash #105 FN+ $1,050; Daredevil #1 GD+ $165; Our Army at War #81 GD+ $300, X-Men #1 FN $1,200, #1 GD $325, #4 VF/NM $395; Fantastic Four #4

continued on page 72

MARKET REPORTS

GREG WHITE
Comic Books & Collectibles
Kissimmee, Florida

Hello again from sunny Central Florida! Along with the oppressive heat, summer has brought a marginal amount of Golden Age and Silver Age activity. We certainly miss the large number of tourists who frequented the area earlier in the decade…hopefully they will return in large numbers in the near future. Our report includes store sales, mail order and our recent dealings at the Chicago Con.

Golden Age 1933-1955

You know that this is an active area! Demand continues for high grade but fortunately there are still many true collectors (as opposed to the ever present speculator herds) who are more than happy to add a solid unrestored very good copy of their favorite title to their collection. Lets be honest… most Golden Age books come to us in less than fine condition. Hopefully we will always have that market to sell to!

Recent acquisitions include Adventure #47; USA #10; Green Lantern #3; Batman #3, #4 and #5; All-Star #2, #23 and #36, and Famous Funnies-A Carnival of Comics from 1933.

We were impressed with the huge amount of quality Golden Age books available in Chicago. There was certainly no shortage of that product if you had the money to spend. Recent sales include Mask #2 $95; Great #3 $125; Batman #5 $1,500; World's Finest #11 $250; Captain Marvel #13 $75, and Detective #16 $750.

Silver Age 1955-1969

I was shocked at the abundance of quality Silver Age books in Chicago and the heavy amount of multiples of all so called "key" issues. Other than San Diego, I had never seen so many number ones and origin

continued on page 72

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SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Continued from page 70

FN $565, #5 FN $620; Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD $850, #2 VG/FN $435, #13 GD $75; Brave and Bold #5 FN/VF $355, Detective #359 NM $75; G.I. Combat #87 FN $85; Incredible Hulk #1 FR/GD $495; JLA #22 FN $125; My Greatest Adventure #80 VF/NM $395.

1950's Books

Just as many market reports hypothesized a few months ago, collectors were attempting to locate esoteric 1950's books. With plenty of famous artists working the interiors, and some pretty good covers to be found, collectors are realizing just how tough these books are to locate. Although prices are still relatively inexpensive (for now), it won't remain that way for long... especially with the ever increasing demand by BOTH Golden Age and Silver Age collectors. Topping the list are pre-code horror, crime, and good girl comics and any with art by Kirby, Kubert, Frazetta, and Ditko.

Sales: Mister Mystery #12 VG $150; World's Finest #71 VF+ $5,200; Young Men #24 FN $210; Young Lovers #18 GD $85; Witch's Tales #1 VF/NM $285, #8 FN $60; Man Comics #1 VG $30; The Kid from Texas #1 NM $87; Boy Detective #1 $155; Buddies In The U.S. Army #1 VF+ $70; Combat Casey #7 & #8 both VF/NM $135 the pair; Superman #76 VF+ $950.

1970's Books

If there is a market that is waiting in uncertainty with regard to the San Diego Con, this market is it! The market for 1970's material and the market for 1950's material share quite a few things in common, including a relative uncertainty in their pricing. Both have a smaller but very devoted following that is now increasing in numbers, and both suffer from the "true market" (books selling at or near Guide) pricing. The result is an "underground" understanding of value and buying and selling based almost solely on insights and knowledge shared by a small group. If the Price Guide has an early 1970's book valued at $2-3 and it is easily selling for $15-$20, what are the collectors to think?

One caveat in this market is that condition is everything. VF/NM or better copies are more the rule rather than the exception, especially if a book is to bring multiples of guide. If dealers bring these highly sought after books to San Diego (and collectors are willing to seek them out) both parties will be amply rewarded.

Sales: Witching Hour #1 VF/NM $40; Jonah Hex #1 NM $58; The Joker #9 NM $12; Flash #217 NM $18, Showcase #94 NM $10; The New Gods #1 VF/NM $50; Night Nurse #4 NM $15; Amazing Spider-Man #124 VF/NM $44; Batman #234 VF/NM $120; Dead of Night #11 NM $18; Adventure #428 VF/NM $28; Action #440 NM/MT $14; Marvel Team-Up #1 NM $100; Phantom Stranger #30 NM $8; Jimmy Olsen #134 VF/NM $32; Werewolf by Night #32 NM $85

A Market Prediction

As we all watch the market move to new heights and more collectors enter the marketplace to compete for the limited supply, the frenzied pace oftentimes seems never ending. Will it end? Not many are willing to predict that it will anytime soon, nor is anyone out there wholesaling Gold and Silver. But every once in a while some collectors and even a few dealers stop, look beyond the trees, and take a look at the forest. Some even begin to question the direction in which this market is moving and the levels it has already reached.

This, of course, is only before they receive the confirming market support provided by the Sotheby's Auction and Chicago Con. Then they resume the fray. As we head into the fall, the only reliable information the market seems willing to give (at this writing) gives credence to the prediction that Golden Age, 1950's, Silver Age, and early 1970's comics will continue to be sound investments... and continue their upward climb. ■

MARKET REPORTS

DAN GREENHALGH
Showcase New England
Wallingford, Connecticut

Marketplace Commentary - Summer is almost gone but in its wake were left strong signs of changes in the market place. If the Chicago Comicon is any indication, it appears that the radical price escalation and, consequently, price increases that we have seen in Golden Age books (particularly in low to mid grades) is coming to an end. The topic of conversation for the weekend in Chicago revolved around the sheer number of Golden Age books available for sale. Never have I personally seen so many quality books available for sale at a major convention.

In past years the most important indicator that a cycle has come to an end is the availability of books whose stock has risen. The formula is quite simple. Cycles begin when the demand for books exceeds supply. Increased demand for books create higher prices. Higher prices bring books into the market place. As the demand for books is satisfied, the cycle comes to an end.

Three factors that could prolong the cycle are: 1) Reaffirmation in the minds of collectors that their money has been well spent. Strong increases in the price guide updates due out this fall should accomplish this for most collectors. 2) The supply of quality Golden Age books in the market might be temporary and will shrink. There have been several large collections that have hit the market place this year and it may be that they just need a little more time to be absorbed. 3) Realistic pricing by

GREG WHITE

Continued from page 70

issues. I counted over 40 copies of Amazing Spider-Man #1 and there were at least 15 copies of Showcase #4 and so on! It is clear to me that unless your book is truly in Near Mint to Mint condition, one is going to have to be willing to lower one's price if you expect to sell the comic book.

All weekend at Chicago I had only one person ask to look at my Amazing Spider-Man #1 and no one ever asked to

dealers for mid-run, non-key, low and mid-grade mainstream Golden Age books (guide plus 10% to 20%) instead of the guide plus 50% to 100% that currently permeates the market. Responsible pricing in a high demand, volatile Golden Age market will make for happy, long term customers.

I also feel that the future of this industry is still in Silver. The demand for Silver Age books has gone unabated for the past five years and is still currently very strong. Only the spotlight has changed focus. My guess is that the spotlight will again shine on Silver within the next few years as more of the people who read these books as kids back in the 1960s re-enter the market.

If population demography studies and basic psychology are any indication, not only will they re-enter the market place, but they will do so as relatively affluent individuals with more disposable income as a group than has ever been experienced by the hobby. I predict that the price of Silver in five to seven years will leave today's collector feeling that they missed out on some incredible opportunities by today's pricing standards. I think high grade Silver will rule the market place for some time to come. It has for the past several years and there are no signs that this will change. I also believe, however, that the demand for low and mid-grade Silver will strengthen as more and more collectors fight over an ever shrinking supply of books featuring their favorite superheros.

SALES: Credit for some of the following sales must be shared with Metropolis, Four Color Comics, and SMRC. Please note that most of the sales reported below on Golden Age are records for the books in their respective grades.

GOLDEN AGE SALES - Detective #27 GD/VG $52,000, #31 FN moderate restoration $5,000, #33 VG/FN $9,000, #33 VG/FN moderate restoration $4,500, #36 FN/VF $2,800, #37 FN/VF $2,800, #38 VF+ moderate restoration $10,000, #38 VF moderate restoration $9,000, #38 FN moderate restoration $6,000; Marvel Comics #1 FN+ light restoration $51,000, #5 NM- (Larson) $23,500, #7 VF+ $5,000; Superman #1 F moderate restoration $21,000, FR $6,000; All America #16 FN+ moderate restoration $18,000; Captain America #1 VF (cleaned) $25,000 in trade, #1 FN+ moderate restoration $12,000, #1 VG/FN moderate restoration $11,000, #2 FN/VF (cleaned) $5,000, #7 VF/NM $6,200, #13 FN+ $2,250; Batman #1 VF+ light restoration $27,000, #1 VF+ moderate restoration $11,000 (2 copies), #1 FN moderate restoration $10,500, #3 FN/VF $3,000, #5 VF+ $4,000; Flash Comics #1 FN moderate restoration $15,000; All-Star Comics #3 FN+ moderate restoration $5,500, #3 FN moderate restoration $5,000, #8 VF+ light restoration $8,000, #8 VF light restoration $7,000, #8 VF+ moderate restoration $6,000; Adventure Comics #48 VG $3,800, #48 VG moderate restoration $3,000; Green Lantern #1 VF- $16,000, #1 VG $4,750; New York World's Fair 1939 VG/FN $4,000; Human Torch #2 (1) FN+ $8,000, #5 VF $3,250; Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 PR $4,000; Sensation Comics #1 FN+ $6,000; World's Best #1 FN $4,000, #1 VG/FN $3,600; All American #19 VG/FN moderate restoration $3,000; Wonder Woman #1 FN/VF $6,500; Red Raven Comics #1 VG $2,800; Planet Comics #1 VG/FN $3,000; Wonder Comics #1 NM (Overstreet Copy) $16,000, #1 (Allentown) $11,000, #2 (Allentown) $4,000; Fantastic #1 (Larson) $7,500; Mystery Men #1 NM (best known copy) $15,500; Exciting #9 VF- (Larson) $6,500; Black Terror #1 FN+ $1,700; Daredevil Battles Hitler VF/NM (File Copy) $6,000; Action Comics #3 VG/FN moderate restoration $5,000, #6 FN+ moderate restoration $1,700, #11 FN/VF $2,000, #15 VF cleaned $2,400, #23 F $1,500; Mask #1 (Mile High) $5,000; Doc Savage #1 VF/NM $5,000; Shadow #1 VF/NM (Overstreet Copy) $5,000; Green Hornet #1 (Mile High) $7,500; Tough Kid Squad #1 VF $5.500.

SILVER AGE SALES - Showcase #4 FN+ restored $3,800; Flash #105 NM- $9,000, FN+ $1,200; Detective #225 VG+ light restoration $1,200; Amazing Fantasy #15 VF $11,000, #15 FN+ $6,000, #15 VF restored $3,000, #15 FN+ restored $2,500 (2 copies), #15 VG $2,200, #15 GD/VG $1,500, #15 GD+ $1,350, #15 GD $1,100;

Amazing Spider-Man #1 VF+ cleaned $9,000, #1 VF- $7,500, #1 FN- $2,200, #1 FN+ restored $2,000, #2 VF/NM $3,500, #2 VF+ $2,800, #3 VF+ $1,700, #14 VF+ $1,100; Daredevil #1 NM $2,400, #1 NM- $1,500; Fantastic Four #1 VF cleaned $7,500, #1 VG/FN $2,500, #1 FN+ restored $2,200, #2 VF $1,700, #48 NM/MT $1,500, #48 NM- $900; Journey Into Mystery #83 VF $2,500 (2 copies); Tales of Suspense #39 FN $1,100; X-Men #1 VF+ $6,000 (2 copies), #1 VF $4,200, #1 VF cleaned $3,800.

see the Amazing Fantasy #15. It was a learning experience.

Sales include JLA #4 $140; World's Finest #55 $175; Showcase #37 $195; Our Army at War #151 $60; Spider-Man Annual #2 $100; Strange Adventures #1 $900 (OK I know that the book is from the early 50s but in my mind it will always be considered Silver Age and most of the run is clearly Silver Age!) Amazing Spider-Man #4 $550; a set of Russ Manning Tarzan comics $140, and a Green Lantern #2 $75.

Artwork and Toys

One more Chicago Con reference and then I'll let it go… there was very little strip art at the show. A large selection of Silver Age comic book art was available but mostly unaffordable. One dealer did have the first two Dennis the Menace Sunday strips and had absolutely NO idea what he had. He sold then cheap to another dealer before the show even started. Amazing!

Our recent acquisitions include a group of Disney animation drawings, Hanna-Barbera cels, and a few daily strips. It has been quiet on the toy front lately. No new collections have come in. We still maintain a selection of pre-1970 bubble gum cards, a few Captain Action items, models, and 1950s & 60s board games.

Recent Sales: Mickey Mouse daily strip $295; Little Mermaid cel $995; Peanuts daily strip $1800.

That's all for now. Hope everyone had a great San Diego Con!

BILL PONSETI - More Fun Comics
New Orleans, Louisiana

This month's market report is being written right after the Chicago Con, and as luck would have it, right before San Diego. Yes, show season is in full swing! Believe it or not, this is my favorite time of the year. I mean what better possible validation could a collector of comic books have for his hobby/love than to be surrounded by thousands of people who share the same passion? Well, the Chicago Con was no exception to this hypothesis. Although sales were somewhat down from the last two shows that I set up at, the types of books sold remained basically the same. However, decrease in sales might not actually be an accurate reflection of some perceived lull in the market. I say this because many times when asked about a price of a certain book I was offering the response I received was "Thanks, but I'm saving up for San Diego!" Whatever!!

Contrary to popular belief Silver Age is NOT dead. I often hear that it is and this concept gives me pause. I think that this started when a group of speculators jumped in to the Silver Age market last year, artificially elevating prices on many books, only to find resistance to these prices when they tried to turn the books over this year. Believe me, there are just as many (if not more) Silver Age collectors out there now as there were last year. Silver is selling briskly for us in all grades, even the much maligned Marvels in VG condition. Admittedly, there are some titles that sell better than others, but this has always been the case, this is not a new phenomenon, as many new collectors/dealers would like the marketplace to believe. There will always be doomsayers in the hobby, there always have been. I remember in 1972 when the first Overstreet came out, there were many dealers who loudly proclaimed that this was the end of the comics hobby. So don't get discouraged when you hear these negative remarks about this wonderful hobby. Things are just fine! As this relates to the Golden Age market, one can discern certain trends here as well. Certainly Timely has been burning up the market for some time now, and has just recently began to level off. Quality titles are heating up, and they are beginning to rival Fox and Continentals in multiple Guide sales. However, the rising star of the esoteric GA market seems to be Cheslers! These beautifully illustrated, tough to find little gems are creeping up in demand; and the price! Keep your eye out for these at your local comic shop or the next con that you attend. And now for a few select sales from the Chicago Con:

Batman #1 GD $10,000, #1 PR $2,000; Green Lantern #1 App. FN $3200; Young Allies #1 GD $1000.

One final thought on the GA and SA markets. If I had to select one group of comics from both areas that is equally strong in demand it would easily be un-restored low grade number ones and keys. As evidenced by a couple of sales above and by many I've made over the past few months, this area of collecting has the most potential of any area of comic collecting. As far as the Golden Age goes, these types of books are becoming more and more scarce, causing the price to easily double, and in some cases triple! The Silver Age counterparts have not shared the increased prices because of the greater supply, but their shelf life is just as short. More to come!

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GREG PHARIS & DAVE GRISEZ
San Diego Comics and Collectibles
San Diego, California

Welcome to the market report from San Diego Comics & Collectibles where the weather is not the only thing that's heating up!

While everyone was saving up for the San Diego Comic Con, the toy sales lagged just abit, but with the older toy material, the savvy collector knows that it may be a one-time one-shot opportunity to obtain that cool collectible.

After much oohing and ahhing over the 'Rock Em Sock Em Robots' one of our customers scored a major KO and walked out the door with the championship belt (and the robots) for the sum of $75. Captain Action is still very strong here. A Dr. Evil accessory pack (Mint in Pack believe it or not) sold for $325. This type of item is extremely rare, and yes, pricey, but those hard core in the know collectors realize that it might be a one-chance-in-a -lifetime opportunity!

An unusual Bambi lamp from the early 70s was snapped up quicker than a roaring forest fire at $30. The Green Hornet rides again in a beautifully packaged View Master 3 reel set with booklet for $55 and a Green Hornet gum ball ring was out of here for $15.

Two comic book sales of interest was a 3D Sheena in FN+ condition for $200; 3D Superman in FR/GD (no glasses) was up, up and away for $50. Two consignment books sold the same day they were brought in. Daredevil #1 (Marvel) VG+ $350 and a Spider-Man #28 in NM for $280. Put on the asbestos gloves for those two sales!! Its been a fun month…comics have been extremely healthy in the Silver and Gold market (what Gold is available goes quickly). High grade DC Silver = high demand and high prices. Thanks again and I hope everyone had a good time while visiting our fair city!

BRUCE ELLSWORTH - Bruces Comics
Sante Fe, New Mexico

Chicago was a gas. I finally got to meet quite a few people who have ordered from me and many who see my market reports in Overstreet. My hats off to all of you!

Having dinner with Shelly Moldoff and his wife Shirley had to be a high light of the show. For all of you out there who are wondering…Shelly and his wife are only 39 years old! (No lie, he told me so!) So…he still has a lot of drawing left in him.

Chicago was the first stop on my 3 show tour. The other two shows are San Diego and Dallas. I feel that there's a beginning of a price resistance in the Golden Age that is beginning to develop. The dealers in Chicago had the largest display of Golden Age that I have ever seen. Not much was selling in the high end range. Mostly cheaper GA and SA at below guide seemed to be the ticket. GA is still great merchandise and I would be willing to bet that San Diego will have been a better show for the high end stuff.

Recent sales: Detective #38 VF $13,200; Startling #49 NM- $1,800; More Fun #101 VG/FN $1,800; Suspense #2 VF $1,400; Captain America #52 & #32 FN- (the pair) $1,200.

I saw a Suspense #3 at the show in VF with the price tag reading $16,000. WOW! I also saw a Superboy #1 in VF+ for $6,500. Lordy, Lordy, have mercy! Till next time…seeya!

BELLA KEMELFELD CONTEST

Soooooooo… you think you know your comics?

Continued from page 70

15. "Howzabout a knuckles message, sweetie-pie?! No Charge! Just use your super-villain credit card!" is associated with what company's Silver Age characters? a. Archie b. Marvel c. Tower d. Charlton

16. What artist did the cover of Dell's Nukla #1? a. Sal Trapani b. Rocke Mastroserio c. Paul Reinman d. Stan Kaye

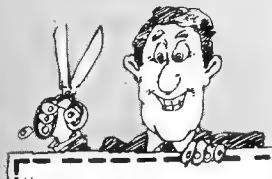
17. What Dell comic first mentions the Junior Woodchucks' Guide by name? a. Uncle Scrooge #5 b. Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #125 c. Four Color #456 d. Huey, Dewey and Louie Back to School (Dell Annual #22)

18. What early critic of comic books described them as " Sex-Horror serials" and "Pulp-paper nightmares." a. Sterling North b. Child Study Association c. Dr. Fredric Wertham d. The Indianapolis Police Department

19. Marcia Reynolds leaves her secretarial job in 21st century Titan City to become a. Futura b. Mysta c. Gale Allen d. Star Pirate

20. The cover art to Classics Illustrated #124 (1955 edition) was done by: a. Lou Cameron b. Del Tobias c. Robert C. Dille d. Harry Harrison

Questions 21-30 coming next issue!



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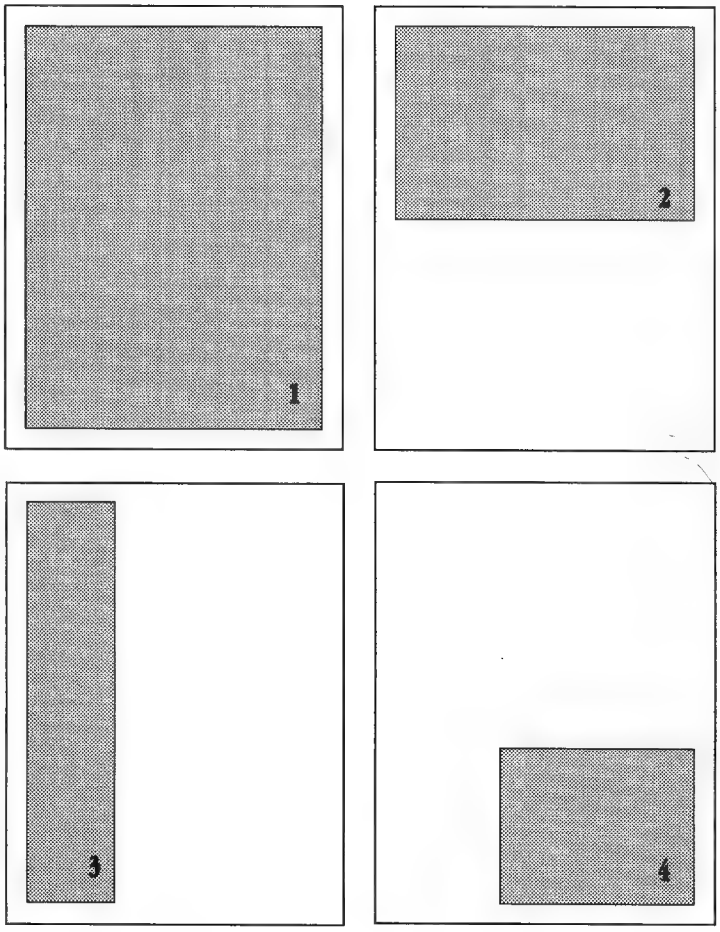

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STEPHEN RITTER - New Mexico
Sotheby's 1995

Although I know that CBM had an article covering the 1995 Sotheby's auction in a previous issue, I thought I'd tell you about my first Sotheby's experience on June 17, 1995. Since I was on the East Coast the week of the auction, I thought that I'd attend instead of phoning in my bids. Sotheby's was a professional as expected. The auction room was well situated and the workers were smooth yet courteous.

Registration was quick and painless. Most of the people in attendance appeared to be old hats. There were dealers that I'd met from around the country and a few that I did not know by face but would have recognized by name. The biggest surprise were the number of locals attending for amusement. One particular person brought his three little tots with a picnic lunch. There were also a number of people reporting on the auction for various publications.

Although the auction ran smoothly, there were several small "hiccups" including several lots displayed not corresponding with the lot numbers. Once this created a problem where they had to back-track and rebid several lots. A huge roar came from the crowd when a phone bidder out bid the previous high bid on a Timely Cap lot, snatching it away from someone in attendance.

In preparation for the auction, I spent the week estimating the value of the comic lots using the Overstreet Price Guide. A quick review of the lots helped me determine the accuracy of the grading (which was tight). The morning of the session consisted of the Golden Age lots and the room was full.

Low to mid-grade GA sold mostly for around Guide except for the few Timely lots offered which averaged 1.3X Guide. A couple of early Cap lots went for 2X Guide. The few high grade lots offered mostly went for multiples of Guide. An Adventure Comics lot in VF- went for 2.5X and a Wonder/Startling lot in FN70 went for an amazing 4X Guide. Five unrestored lots of low to mid-grade pre-Batman Detectives did very well, all selling between 2X and 3X Guide. Even two restored lots sold for 1.7X to 2X Guide.

Unrestored GA keys generally went for 1.5X to 4X Guide. Examples were Adventure Comics #61 FN58 @ 2.7; All-American #16 & 17 VG @ 1.5; All-Star #8 FN69 @ 4X; Batman #1 FN56 @ 2X; Captain America #1 FN71 @ 1.6X; Detective #27 VG49 @ 2.8X; Marvel Comics #1 FN56 @ 1.75X; More Fun #53 VF75 @ 2.9X; More Fun #54 FN71 @ 2X. Except for a few exceptions, restored keys did not fair well as several did not meet the minimum bid. Examples include All Star #3 App. FN 57 passing at $7K; Batman #2 App. VF79 passing at $1,700 and Captain America #1 App. VF75 passing at $18K. Restored books which sold included Action #1 App. VF75 @ 1.4 Guide; Batman #1 App. FN71 @ the FN price; Human Torch #3 App. VF75 @ 1.5X Guide; More Fun #54 App. VF77 near Guide and Sub-Mariner #1 App. VF76 @ Guide.

The afternoon session consisted of the 1950s and Silver Age lots. Only about 65% of the morning crowd showed in the afternoon, indicating the emphasis on the GA books. Low and mid-grade EC books were the first lots presented. All went for 55%-90% of Guide with the Sci Fi titles doing the best. After a few miscellaneous titles of Avon, DC and Charlton going at 70%-90% of Guide, the Mohawk Valley Collection lots began. This collection was mostly late 40s to early 60s DC books. Although the page qualities were average with some dust shadows on the covers, these books were very clean with little structural damage.

The earlier Mohawk Valley books were in the FN range while the later books were mostly VF. The first lot was the Showcase #4 in VF84 and it sold for $34,500 (over twice Guide). The only other keys sold individually were Detective #225 and #226 VF77 @ 3.3X Guide, and Adventure #247 VF85 with a number of Brave and Bold books at 2.25X Guide. Across the board , most of the Mohawk Valley lots sold for about 1.3X Guide, which was considerable higher than the other DC lots sold later in the day. Several lots commanded multiples of Guide. These included Action #152-193 FN71 @ 3.3X, #194-266 VF83 @ 2.6X; Superman #100-139 @2.2X. Only four miscellaneous Mohawk Valley lots sold below Guide. Overall, there were more people bidding on the Mohawk lots than any of the afternoon lots.

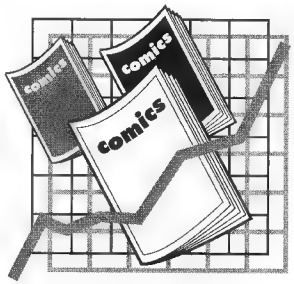
One thing that I did notice was that most of the active bidders were dealers. I wondered what they will price these books at knowing they paid above Guide for them.

The last comic book section was mostly Silver Age Marvel with some DC. An interesting note was that restored Silver Age keys did very badly. Two Amazing Fantasy #15s in App. FN58 and VG52 did not meet the reserves, the later passed at $800. A Showcase #4 App. FN74 also did not meet the minimum bid. Other Amazing Fantasy #15s sold for $6,325 in FN62 (1.5X Guide) and 2588 in VG52 (80% of Guide). Two Amazing Spider-Man #1s went for around 1.3X Guide in FN74 and VF76. A Detective #225 in FN56 sold for $1,725 (2.5X Guide). Most low grade Marvel runs sold for about 65% of Guide while mid to high grade runs sold for around 85% of Guide depending on titles and issues. The few DC lots sold for similar percentages except midgrade runs which went for an average of 50% of Guide.

Being only interested in the comic books, I did not pay too much attention to the original art and memorabilia lots offered. However, a good portion of these lots went unsold failing to meet the reserves. By the end of the day I felt my Sotheby's experience was well worth the effort. The action and excitement of the bidding was indescribable. By the end of the day I walked away with three Silver Age lots myself and one EC original art lot… but I just missed out on ten other lots.

Attending the Sotheby's as a great experience, one I can recommend to every serious collector!

■ **End Market Reports**



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Continued from page 11

Baker. Although I was saddened at the thought of his early death, as an African-American myself, I was pleased to hear that there was such an early (Golden Age) contribution from an African-American artist... and a brilliant one at that. I have read several articles on good girl artists and this fact was not revealed in any of them. Thank you for this great revelation.

Ernie Jarvis, North Carolina

Audible "Gasp"

The Schomburg painting on the cover of your latest issue (#26) is incredible! Mr. Schomburg is a genuine comic book legacy all by himself! I can think of no one from the early days that was (and still is) so universally respected and admired. When I saw the Red Skull cover I actually voiced an audible "gasp" at my local shop... followed by an excited purchase of duplicate copies. WHAT - A - COVER!!!! A loyal CBM reader...

B. Wallace, California

An original Schomburg color piece on a CBM is a dream come true. Talk about your hard acts to follow...

Writing For CBM

Would it be possible to get a list of your writer guidelines, if such exist? I'm interested in the possiblity of writing for you. Thanks.

John Pierce, Ohio

I'd be glad to discuss the guidelines for summiting articles to CBM. Just give us a call.

An Appreciative Reader

You have the best publication available on the world's greatest hobby. An appreciative reader...

John Alan James, Texas

Trimmed All Star #3?

I am so happy to see you back in business. Hope you run strong for many years. Happy hunting for those rare and scarce books. Two quick questions: (1) On a copy of All-Star #3 the small logo stating A DC Publication is missing a very small slice toward right edge. Does this mean the cover has been trimmed, or is this typical for some All-Star #3s. (2) Will the magazine Gold & Silver Age Quarterly Price Update still be published? There seems to be some confusion.

Richard C. Cavalieri, Pennsylvania

1. Comic books from that era were commonly mistrimmed at the bindery and the missing part of the DC logo does not necessarily mean that your copy was trimmed. I suggest seeking further opinion from local experts. Many books that look like they were trimmed to hide defects were actually mistrimmed as part of the bindery process. The issue of trimming continues to be one of the most challenging areas of identification faced by collectors today.
2. The Golden & Silver Quarterly is no longer being published.

Thanks to everyone who wrote in this issue. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content.

If you'd care to write, send your cards and letters to:

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Captain Marvel 11 FN+ $300
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Captain Marvel 24 VF $500
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Funny Pages V2#10 VG+ (SC) $700
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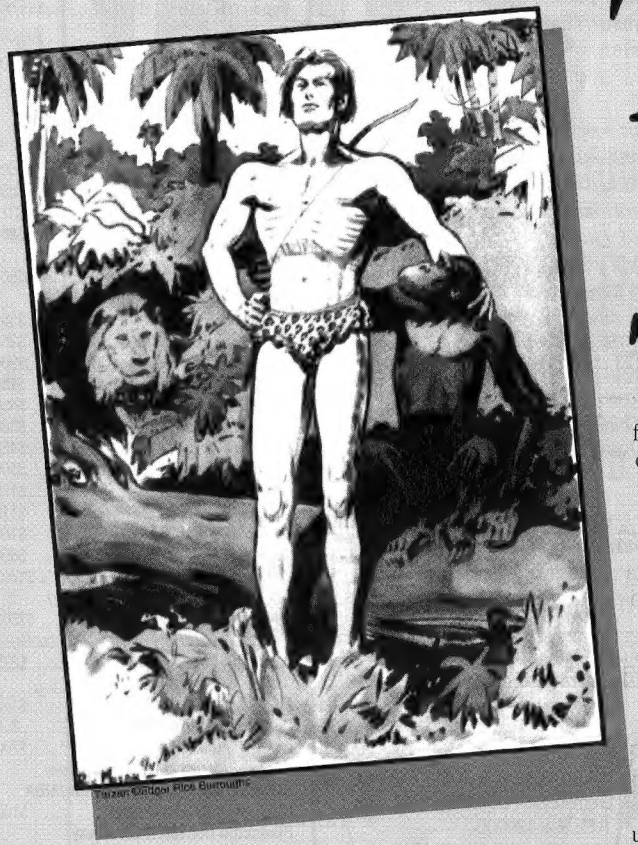


One of the first comic book premiums

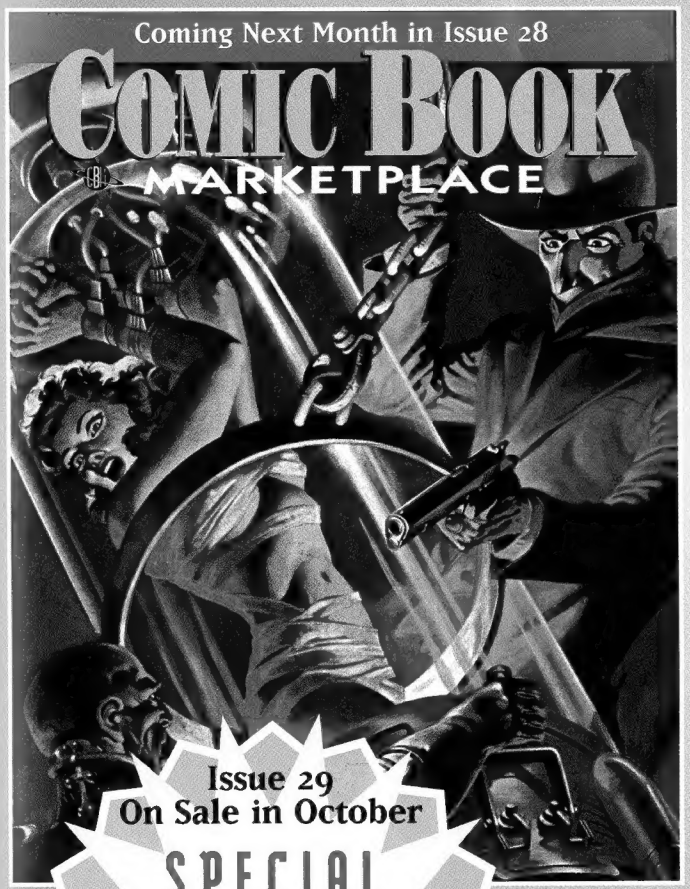
CONTRIBUTED BY
CHARLIE ROBERTS

This 1937 Tarzan portrait by newspaper-strip artist Rex Mason is one of the very first premiums to tie into the fledgling comic book field. The United Features Syndicate was one of the earliest comic book publishers; the first newspaper strip company to produce their own comics. *Tip Top* began in April, 1936, consisting entirely of strip reprints. In those days Tarzan shared the spotlight in the title with Li'l Abner and the Captain and the Kids.

The picture is 8-1/2" x 11" on shiny cover stock and says at the bottom: "Tarzan: Gift Picture No. 1 of a series – Tarzan appears each month in *Tip Top Comics Magazine*". *Tip Top* was the longest-lived of the reprint titles... United Features Syndicate published it until 1955. Then St. John published it for a couple of years, until it was bought by Dell which kept it going through #225 in mid-1961.

The concept of "giveaways" and "sendaways" and other promotional items originated during the heyday of pulps and old time radio in the 1920s and early 1930s. Amazingly, it still goes on today as the various companies and their associated characters continue to court the ever fickle buying public. ■

JIM STERANKO!



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